A Complete Fantasy Adventure Game Magazine

PROTEUS

Nº 9

80p

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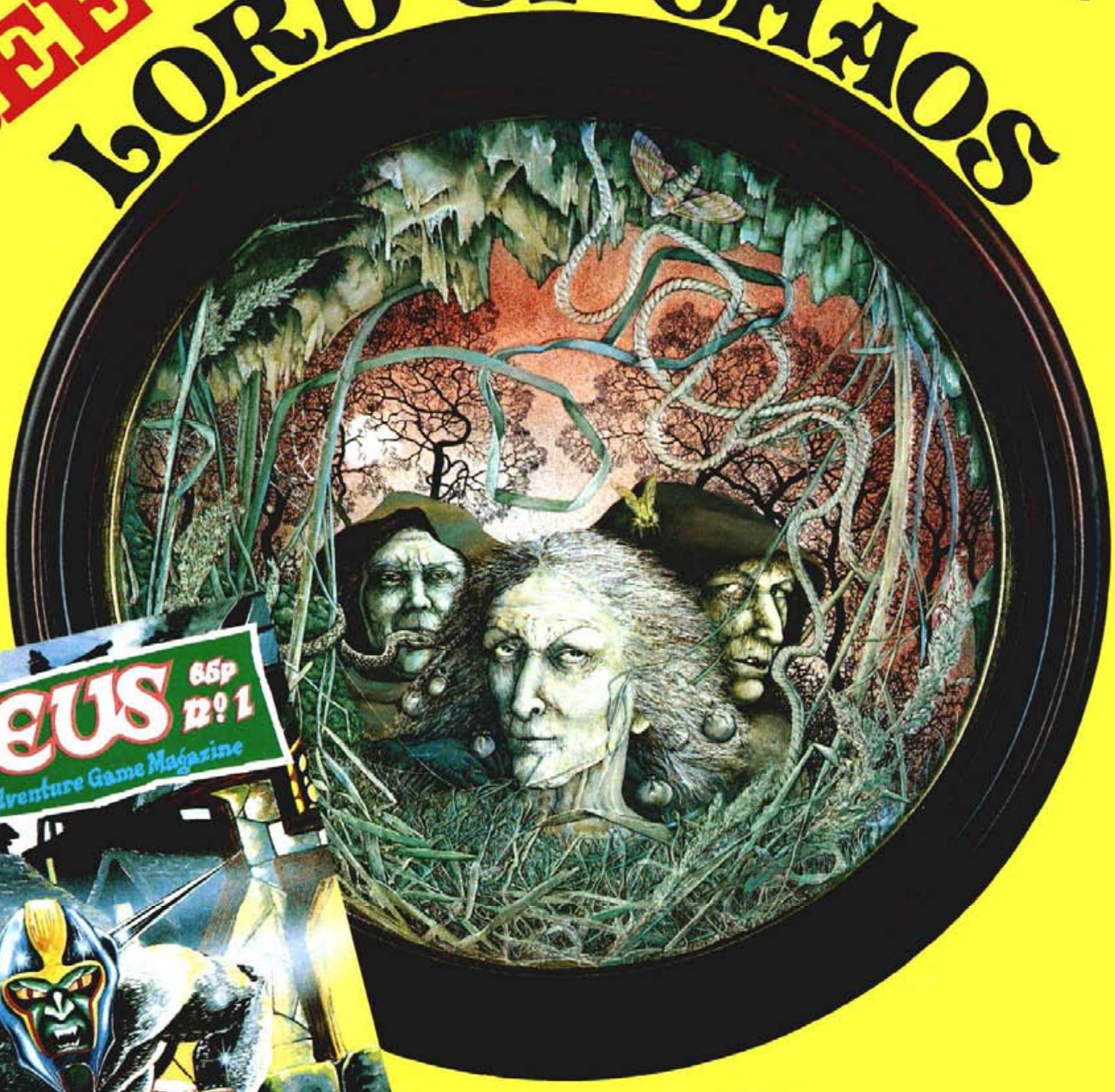
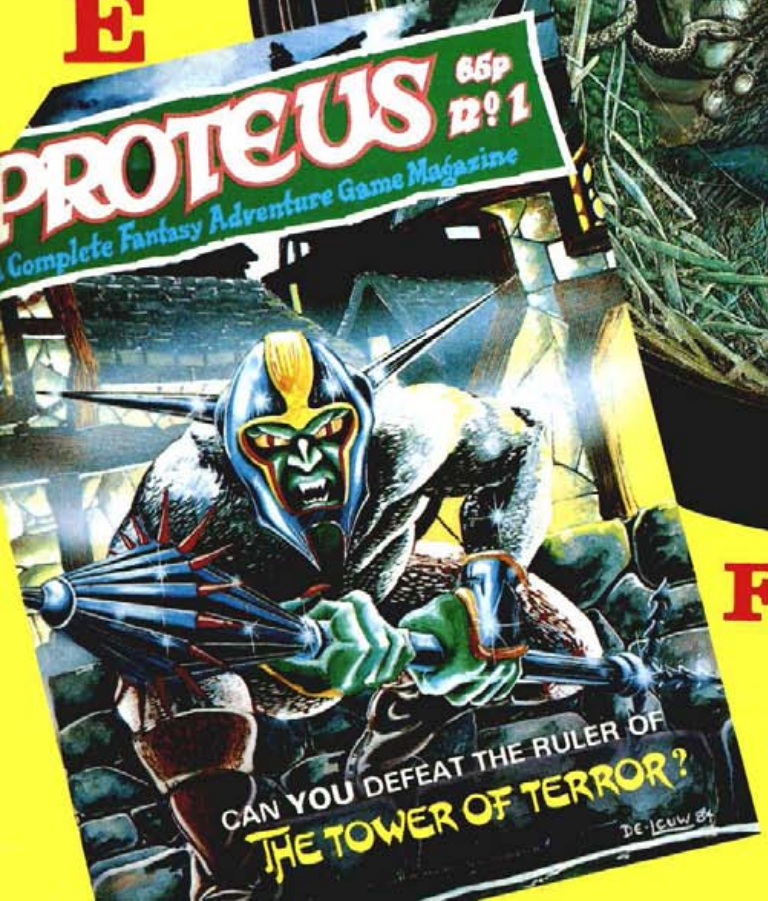


INSIDE



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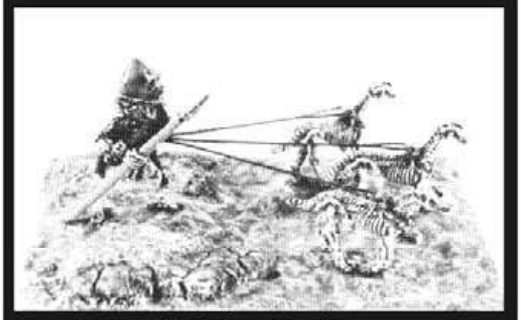

163 Skeleton War Dogs.

101 Adventurers
102 Females
103 Frost Giant
104 Clerics
105 Were Creatures
106 Skeleton Cavalry
107 Halflings
108 Goblins
109 Orcs
110 Dwarves
111 Monks
112 Elves
113 Specialists
114 Undead
115 Bugbears
116 Golems
117 Dragon Men
118 Scorpions
119 Hill Giant
120 Wing Folk
121 Knights
122 Wizards
123 Lizard Men
124 Greenwood Adventurers
125 Armoured Dragonmen
126 Skeleton Cavalry — barded horse
127 Familiars and Homoculi
128 St. George and the Dragon
129 Undead Orcs
130 Bolt Thrower with Undead Crew of 2
131 Dwarf Hydra
132 Flying Carpet and Crew
133 Elite Skeleton Infantry
134 Umberbulk
135 Armoured Centaurs
136 Goatkin Warriors
137 Storm Giant
138 Orcus
139 Demons
140 Searcher of Souls & Writhing Crusher
141 Clerics
142 Hippogriff
143 Captives
144 Barbarians
145 Ogres
146 Skeleton Command Pack
147 Skeleton Mounted Kettle-drummer
148 Skeleton Guard
149 Skeleton Infantry
150 Undead Centaurs
151 Cavalier/Paladin
152 Cavemen
153 Assassins
154 Dark Evils
155 Kobolds
156 Ninja Giant
157 Death Giant
158 Hobgoblins
159 Skeleton Ninja
160 Dragonmen Specialists
161 Beauty and the Beast
162 Orcish Giant
163 Skeleton War Dogs
164 Vikings
165 Samurai Command Pack
166 Unicorn and Maiden
167 Orcish Chieftain
168 Warlords
169 Skeleton Lancer
170 Samurai Standard Bearer
171 Wraiths
172 Skeleton Foot Knights
173 Oriental Spearmen
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212 Deep Ones
213 Daredevils
214 Law Enforcers
215 Newshounds
216 Intrepid Sleuths
217 Monsters of Madness
218 Hound of Tindalos with Ghoul and Zombie
219 Winged Horrors
220 Dark Young of Shub-niggurath and Shoggoth
221 Cthonians
222 Nyarlathotep
223 Tsathoggua
224 Old One and Dimensional Shambler
225 Spawn of Cthulhu
226 Hunting Horror of Nyarlathotep
227 Great Race of Yith

PROTEUS No. 9

Lord of Chaos

by J.A.Collar

DICE and a pencil are all you need to begin this adventure – then *you* decide which route to take, which dangers to brave.

As you progress in your Quest, you are likely to encounter various traps, or face monsters. You will also get information, or find certain items which will be of help to you in your quest. You should record these in your *quest sheet* as well as keeping an account of how many rations you have left. As you use up rations, remember to cross them off in your *quest sheet*.

It is important that you build up a map of the way. You may not succeed at your first attempt, but each new journey will give you more information – until you are at last successful in your quest.

If you try to read the magazine in numerical order, it will make no sense. You must choose, when you are given the choice, which section to turn to, and which traps, puzzles, or monsters to face. Good luck!

The free poster in Issue 10, on sale January 16th, 1987, is by Julek Heller.

The story will be by Elizabeth Caldwell – and your journey through the catacombs beneath the legendary city of Llamar will not be an easy one, as you attempt to unlock the meaning of coded messages as well as battling your way past the inhabitants of the catacombs.

Your aim? To face – and defeat – Fear, Pain, and Death personified, motivated by a fierce desire for vengeance, rather than the promise of any material reward.

ILLUSTRATIONS
FRONT COVER: Linda Garland
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Editor Mike Kenward
PA Pauline Mitchell
Assistant Editor David Brunskill
Assistant Editor/Production David Barrington
Editorial Proteus, 6 Church Street, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 1JH. Tel: Wimborne (0202) 881749
Advertisement Manager Peter J. Mew, 4 Neasden Ave., Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO16 7HG. Tel: Clacton (0255) 436471

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Introduction

THIS is not a story about our modern world, but one of long ago, when strange creatures roamed the land, and Sorcerers possessed great power. As an adventurer, your Strength, Courage and Agility have brought you safely through many daunting quests in the past. And when you begin this adventure, you will need all these qualities. Below, you will discover – with a little luck – how swift and strong, you are.

You will need two dice, a pencil, and several sheets of paper: use the pencil and paper to draw a map of your progress. You may not succeed at the first attempt, and the map will be useful in future attempts.

There is a Quest Sheet opposite, for you to write down your scores for Dexterity and Strength, and to keep a note of your rations, secrets learnt, and items discovered. You may prefer, before you begin your adventure, to use the printed Quest Sheet simply as a model for the things you will need to take note of, or keep a record of, during your Quest. If you do this, you will obviously need another piece of paper to copy down the headings on the Quest Sheet.

Dexterity and Strength

Roll one dice. Add 6 to this number, and make a note of it on your Quest Sheet. This is your *Dexterity* score, and indicates your skill and mastery of swordsmanship.

Roll two dice. Add 12 to this number, and make a note of it on your Quest Sheet. This is your *Strength* score, and is a measure of your fitness and stamina.

Your Strength and Dexterity ratings will probably change during the course of your adventure. You may lose Strength points in battle, for example, and then restore them by eating a meal. Your characteristics may also be affected by items you discover in the course of your adventure, and, in such situations, you will be told in the text what to do.

You must remember, however, that your Strength and Dexterity scores must never exceed their *Initial* values, as determined by the dice rolls at the start of any one adventure.

Beginning your journey

You are dressed in leather armour, and are equipped with a sword, shield and a short dagger. You carry a backpack in which to stow your provisions and any items you may discover.

You are far from penniless at the start of your quest: you arrive in the city of Valantia with fourteen gold pieces in your pocket. During the course of your adventure, you may choose to spend some or all of these; however, you may find more gold during your journey. It is a good idea to keep track of the number of gold pieces you possess, as the total changes.

Rules for fighting

As you explore, you will encounter creatures which you may choose to engage in combat, or be forced to fight with for your life. Each creature will have its own Dexterity and Strength scores, given in the text. Make a note of these.

To resolve a battle:

1. Roll two dice, and add the creature's current Dexterity score. This is its *Fighting Power.*

2. Roll two dice, and add your own current Dexterity score. This is *your Fighting Power.*

3. If your *Fighting Power is* greater than the creature's, you have scored a blow and wounded it. Subtract two Strength points from its Strength score at that moment (unless told otherwise in the text). If the creature's *Fighting Power is* greater than yours in this round, it has wounded you. Subtract two points from your current Strength score. If both scores are the same, you have parried each other's blows, and neither of you loses any points.

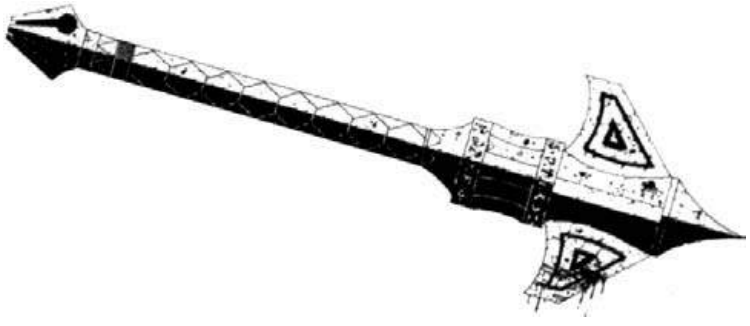
The next round in the battle is done in just the same way. You repeat steps 1, 2, and 3 above. When either your or the creature's Strength score is reduced to zero, the battle is over. A zero Strength score means death.

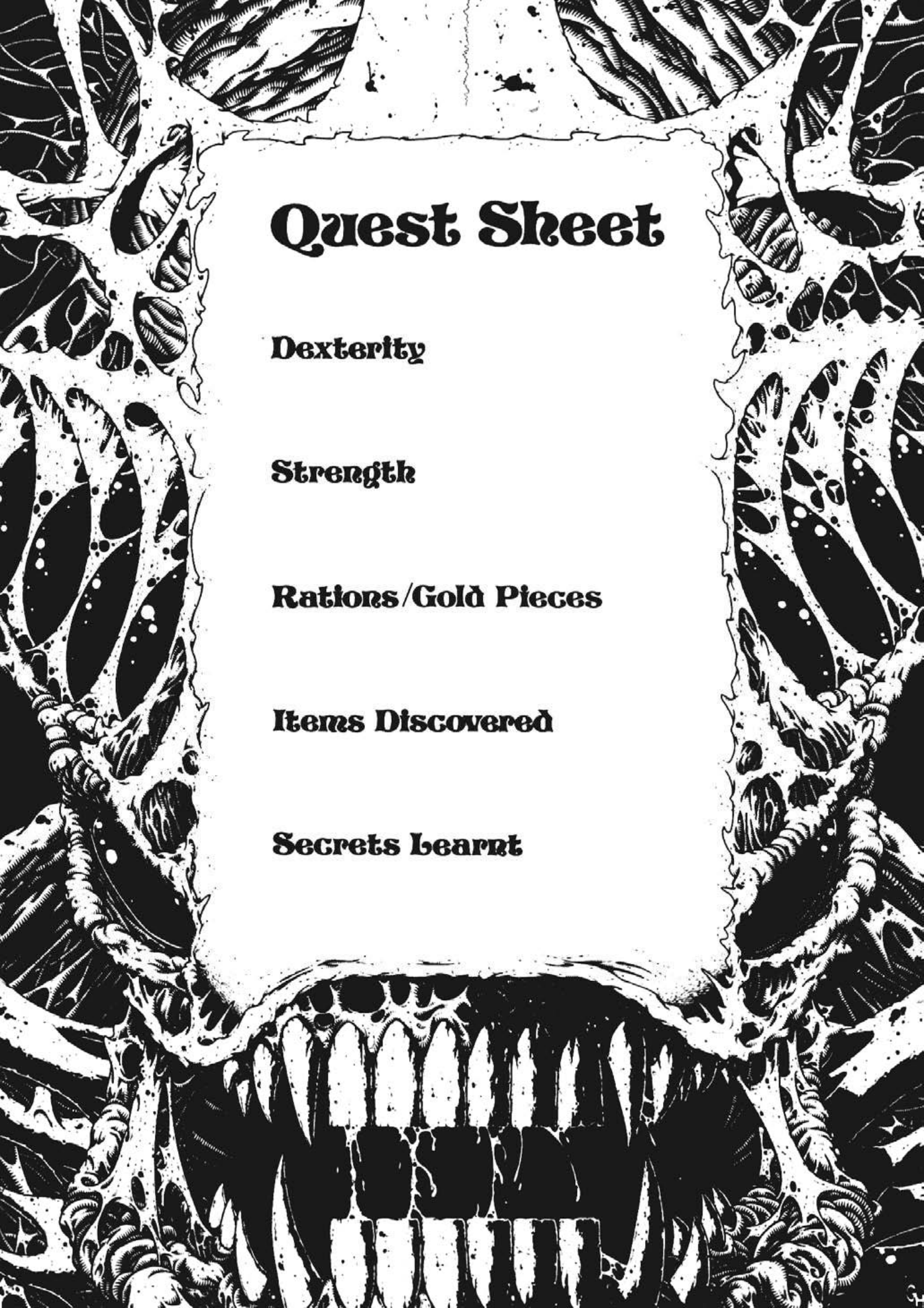
Losing and gaining points

In some sections, you will be awarded extra points (for example, you may read "Gain three Strength points"). You add these to your current Strength score: but remember, these scores may never exceed their *Initial* values. When you lose points (for example, "Lose one Dexterity point and, two Strength points"), you simply deduct these from your current scores.

Replenishing your Strength

You will shortly read about the beginning of your Quest in the land of Kaercaradduc. Before leaving, you are given sufficient provisions for *six* meals, and a flask of fresh water. These are your rations for the task ahead of you – make a note of them. Eating a meal restores five Strength points. When you stop for a meal – which you may do at any time, except during a battle – add five points to your current Strength score, and deduct one from the number of meals remaining to you. But remember to use your rations wisely: you have a long and hard journey ahead of you.





Quest Sheet

Dexterity

Strength

Rations/Gold Pieces

Items Discovered

Secrets Learnt

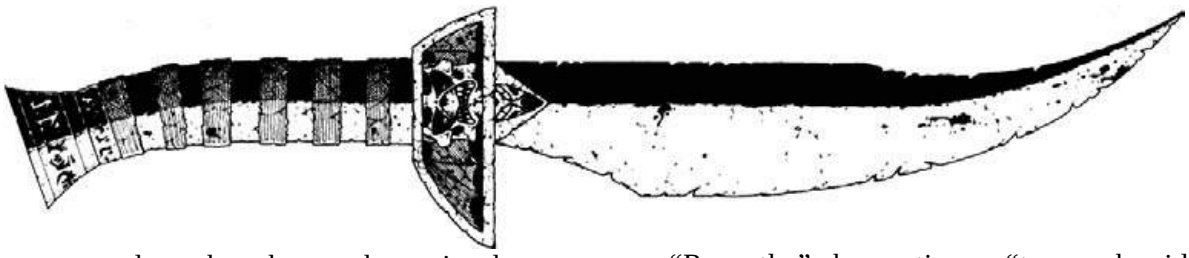
Your Quest Begins..

A seasoned adventurer, you walk with easy confidence along a path through uncultivated fields in the late afternoon sun. You have little idea what territory you are now crossing, and are unconcerned. You see, to the North, what looks like a walled city, though you cannot be certain from this distance.

The long shadows cast by the setting sun indicate that it is too late to investigate further now, and so you make up a bed for the night beneath an oak-tree, from bracken and leaves, and begin collecting twigs and branches for a fire.

Later, as you are about to settle down to sleep, you have the uneasy feeling of being watched; your hand on your sword-hilt, you look cautiously around, but can see no-one. Nevertheless, you stoke up your fire, and spend a restless night, your sleep disturbed by dreams of demons and unquiet spirits.

You feel a sense of relief at sunrise, and, after a quick meal of bread and cold meat, hurry North towards the walled city on the horizon. Approaching, you see that the path ends abruptly at a high stone wall, into the top of which is set spear-heads and sharp spikes. Lifting yourself up, you can see the fields of wheat and maize beyond; in other fields, cattle and sheep graze, and a number of people are tending the land and the animals. You call out and wave, but, although several people look



up, you get no reply – though one shouts in alarm, and shortly two tall men approach, wearing breast-plates, helmets, and with swords strapped to their sides.

"What is your business, Stranger?" asks one, and you explain that you are a traveller, an adventurer seeking a challenge. The two have a heated, whispered conversation, and eventually appear to agree. They call for a ladder, and this is passed to you by a suspicious worker; you set it against the wall, climb over, and jump down. The two guards immediately each grasp an arm, and escort you in silence through the farmlands until you reach the city gates. At a sign, the gates are opened, and you walk through long, twisting corridors, losing all sense of direction, until at last you stop before a plain door, and one of the guards knocks. After a short pause, the guards step back and beckon you in.

The door opens at your touch, and you enter a small room; although there are windows in the walls, the air is filled with acrid smoke, which emanates from a crystal dish in the centre of the bare floor, where smoulders a mix of roots and leaves. Standing at the end of the room, regarding you with a thoughtful expression, is a young woman. Her features are angular, her eyes unusually large and white, the pupils mere dots; long hair falls loosely over her shoulders. Her shirt is very finely-made, you note, though her short skirt is coarse-woven and dull-brown. A jackdaw sits on her left wrist.

"I am Glamarye," she says, adding after a few moments, "and I am told that you call yourself an adventurer. You are held here only for the moment – then you may leave, either towards Kaercaradduc, or in any other direction you may care to wander."

You ask to hear more, and, after a moment's thought, Glamarye beckons you to sit. There is nowhere you realise, as you glance round the room, but the floor, and so you lower yourself, your back against the wall. Glamarye walks forward, standing above you, and frowns.

"You make your living by your sword and your wits. You have fought well and thought carefully in the past. But you have, even now, fourteen gold pieces in your possession. You are not in need."

Glamarye waits for a response from you, and getting none, continues: "Here in Valantia, we dislike violence. Those who offend are exiled, to make their way as best they can in the world. North of our city is Kaercaradduc, where many of them now live, though it is a harsh and unforgiving place. From here, we can see no further North than the tall, wide ridge of Pen-Dinas, which crosses the Southern part of Kaercaradduc. Strange beasts roam, and the sun beats down on the hard, stony land. Consequently, exiles have, on occasion, raided our farmlands. We keep constant guard, but of late they have become more daring and violent.

"Recently," she continues, "two such raiders were caught. They would give no explanation for their new daring. One, I cursed." She looks at you. "The spell closed his eyelids forever. He was guided out of Valantia, to make his way as best he could in Kaercaradduc.

"Then the other decided to speak. He told of a 'charmed circle', a great stone monument, which the exiles believe will shortly cause the downfall of Valantia.

"There are legends of such a circle – the books and scrolls of the Ancients describe it. I investigated the legends further. They tell of the arch-demon Uthergan, who called himself the Lord of Chaos in far-off days. It is prophesied that he will one day return, rising from the charmed circle, and wreak havoc, laying waste all about him. Further, the scrolls tell of the exact time and year of his return."

Glamarye walks away, looking out of a window. "The year is this one," she says, as though to herself, "and the time of Uthergan's rising is at sunset on the evening of the Autumnal Equinox." She turns again, and looks at you steadily: "that is today."

Glamarye's face haunts and challenges you: "We offer a purse of a thousand gold pieces," she says, fading into the shadows. A moment later, she drops a heavy saddlebag at your feet, bulging with gold. "It will remain here," she tells you. "Should you return, you may claim it. It is for you to decide."

You jump to your feet, telling Glamarye that you have fought demons before and survived, and will leave at once to face Uthergan. She sighs. "You cannot. His power is far greater than yours, or mine. Only in one way, say the Ancients, may he be destroyed: you must find the four symbols of power, and place them, one each, at the points of the compass in the charmed circle. But each is protected: there is a golden plate, held by the spirit of a warrior long dead; a statuette bounded in lies; a collar of amber, the prize of Dinadan; and the three Sisters of Went will lead you to the urn. All of these artefacts must be discovered, and placed in the charmed circle, before the sun sets today."

It takes only a moment for you to reach your decision: already the sun is climbing. You will discover the four artefacts, and end the nightmare of Uthergan rising before it can begin. You nod, and Glamarye calls out. A guard enters, and takes you to a store-room, giving you six packages of food, a flask of water, and a flint to make fire.

Checking your sword, shield and dagger, you sling your backpack across your shoulders, and follow the guard to the North gates. Without a backward glance, you begin your quest.

Now read on....

1

You leave the protected city of Valantia, and follow the road North. Either side of the road, the land is stony and dry – harsh scrubland supporting tangleweed, thorn bushes and gorse.

The sun continues its steady climb in the cloudless, vibrant sky, and sweat begins to trickle down your neck. The ridge of Pen-Dinas glowers in the distance, shimmering in the heat-haze. You stop at a junction, and take a cautious sip from your water-flask. Aware that your time is limited, and with no idea where, in this desolate landscape the artefacts might be, you consider; will you take the road:

East? Turn to **115**
West? Turn to **161**

2

You move slowly along the passage East, testing your footing and peering into the gloom as you go. A sudden shrill squeal stops you in your tracks, and before you can collect your senses, you are being attacked by what feels like a hundred invisible enemies, tugging at your arms and hair, as you wildly swing your sword, making contact only with the rock walls.

The assault fades into the distance as quickly as it began, and, as you stand in the tunnel, breathing deeply, you gradually realise that you are quite unharmed: your movement simply disturbed a colony of bats!

Sweating slightly, despite the chill air, you walk forwards again, and shortly see a new way off to your left; and there appears to be daylight in the distance, at the end of this tunnel North. If you wish to try the way North, turn to **120**. To continue East, turn to **38**.

3

Your journey South is uneventful, and it is not long before you arrive at another junction. A road leads off to the East. Will you:

Take the new road East? Turn to **8**
Continue South? Turn to **158**

4

You quickly reach the top of the ridge, and follow the path down the other side, looking out for any further attacks. The temperature increases again, as you eventually reach the foothills on the North side of Pen-Dinas, and continue due North, towards the road you saw earlier. In this part of Kaercaradduc, tall grasses wave in the light wind, and you have to push your way through, wary of any hostile creature that might be lurking.

The ground slopes gently downwards, and then up again, and the tall grasses thin out. Not far away is the road you saw from the top of the ridge, and you hurry towards it. Turn to **14**.

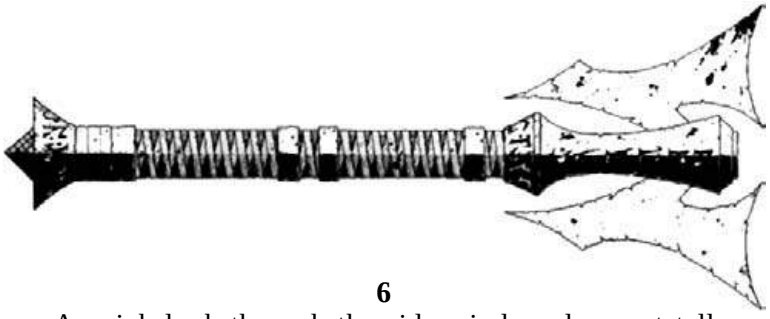
5

The road East soon turns North, and the vegetation becomes more dense and green with every step. The air begins to become humid, the trees taller, thicker, dripping moisture. It is not long before you realise that you have entered a deep rain-forest – the sun able to penetrate the gloom only by gleaming shafts streaming through the trees.

You allow a couple of minutes for your eyes to become accustomed to the light before continuing on the path – and are glad you did, as you detect movement ahead. From behind the trees, a huge, snarling creature steps out and into your path. Humanoid, but with a body matted with green and brown hair, the SKULLSNAPPER reaches out a fiercely-clawed, massive hand. Although armed only with a sharpened stake, if this creature gets close enough, its great paw will crush your skull like a ripe tomato. Sword at the ready, you advance, as the Skullsnapper weaves before you, its colouring making it well-camouflaged against the foliage.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
SKULLSNAPPER:	11	8

If you win, turn to **51**.



6

A quick look through the side window does not tell you much – the place appears to be quite empty. Going round to the front again, you hold your shield before you, and slowly open the door, alert for booby-traps. The door swings inwards, raising a cloud of dust, but there is no sound from within.

Sword at the ready, you pass through the doorway, and look around. But apart from some old sacking in the corner, and a broken stool, the place is empty. You turn the sacking over with your sword, but it conceals nothing, and you turn to leave – but as you take a step towards the doorway, the floorboards collapse in a sudden explosion of splinters and dust, and you fall through.

The ground is only a foot or so below, but your leg and arm have been quite badly cut by the jagged wooden splinters. Lose four Strength points.

Angrily, you pull yourself out, and leave the hut, heading North. Turn to **139**.

7

Following the poor track North, you find that it soon turns East, before ending. A wall of dense branches, leaves, and vines faces you. Time is running short, and you dash back, turning left, and passing the place where you found the urn, until you arrive back at the junction. You breathlessly push your way East – turn to **163**.

8

The road is good, passing straight through dry, dusty scrub, and you soon arrive at a junction. North, the road slopes down gently, and it also continues to the East. Will you take the road:

North? Turn to **57**
East? Turn to **185**

9

With trembling hands, you pour in exactly nine drops of water from your flask, and then gently lift the urn. It is smaller than you had expected, fitting easily into your hand, and you place it with great care into your backpack. Turn to **108**.

10

You pull the small bottle from your backpack, and, with a quick prayer to any Gods that might be watching, drink the contents.

Slightly to your surprise, the potion takes immediate effect. Your movements are speeded up a hundred times, and the Lathlaks appear by contrast to be moving sluggishly, as though under water. You are able to easily slip past the circle of attackers, and you trot away in what appears to be the best direction – North, towards Pen-Dinas. Turn to **35**.

11

It is not long before you see that there is a road to the East. North, you can see the ridge of Pen-Dinas. Will you:

Continue North? Turn to **36**
Take the road East? Turn to **145**

12

You can feel frightened eyes watching as you walk, and occasionally catch a glimpse of someone darting away out of sight.

It is a small village, and you are passing the last house – a small, stone-built place – when a man steps out of it. He seems nervous, wringing his hands, and trying to force a smile. “Good day, Stranger,” he stutters, in a whining voice, “I wish you well on your journey.” You wait, and after a pause, the man continues: “I am poor, but skilled, I was once most sought-after, and well-paid – till I used my skills to steal. That was many years ago. But I am still an artificer, and perhaps I may be of some small assistance to you.” The last sentence is gabbled out, and you take a long look at this pathetic figure as he beckons you into his house. Will you:

Go in? Turn to **123**
Ignore him, suspecting a trap, and go on your way North? Turn to **141**

13

The merchant's eyes gleam in the lamplight, and he bustles about his tables, blowing away dust and clearing cobwebs. At last he holds up three small bottles. The first, he tells you, is a potion of Clarity, which will enable you to see through any solid object; the second is a potion of Fleetfoot – enabling you to move incredibly fast for a short period; and the third is a potion of Healing; this will not work on yourself, but will, he assures you, cure others' wounds.

Much as you distrust this man, you are tempted by what he has to offer. Each potion costs three gold pieces. Will you buy a potion of:

Clarity?	Turn to **181**
Fleetfoot?	Turn to **137**
Healing?	Turn to **77**

14

It is not long before you reach the road, and you stop to look each way. Will you go:

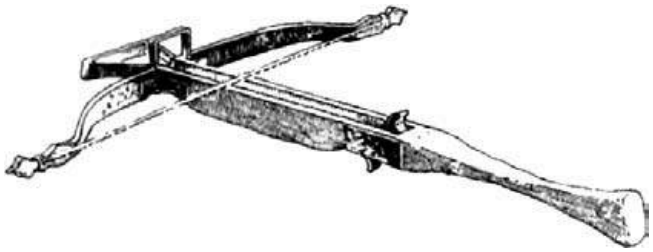
East?	Turn to **5**
West?	Turn to **184**

15

The vegetation increases as you hurry North, the trees becoming taller, and the matted undergrowth becoming thicker and greener.

You stop for a moment – there are faint murmurings at the side of the road. You push into the dense foliage for a short distance, sword in hand, but can see no-one. Warily, you cut your way back to the main road to continue North, and after a short time see a new road to your right. Will you now take the road:

East?	Turn to **8**
North?	Turn to **48**



16

The passage North turns to the West after a short while, and becomes low and narrow. Very soon, you find that you can make progress only by inching forward using your elbows and knees. Fortunately, you are soon through this narrow gap, and can walk normally again, but you have sustained a number of small, painful cuts. Lose one Strength point.

You continue West, but the tunnel soon turns South, and after a short distance, you see an opening on your right, at the end of which is daylight. You realise that you are back at the place you originally entered, and so you head West, extinguishing your torch, and step out onto the road again. Will you now go:

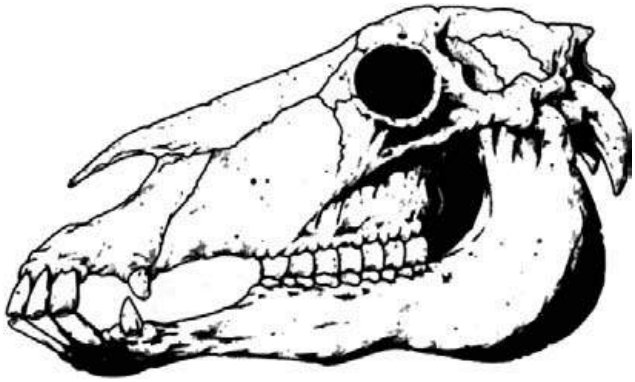
North?	Turn to **79**
South?	Turn to **183**

17

You take out the potion of Fleetfoot, remove the stopper and drain the small bottle. Immediately, your movements are quickened a hundred-fold, and the exiles seem to be quite unaware of your sudden dash East. You skim over the dense undergrowth, finally collapsing in a heap as the effects of the potion wear off. You are well clear of danger – but the collar of amber remains with the exiles. Without all the artefacts, you will be unable to prevent Uthergan rising . . . your quest is over.

18

Have you got all four artefacts? If so, turn to **107**. If not, turn to **178**.



19

The way West, although narrow, is straight, and the path good, and you hurry along it, following it round, as it turns to the South after a while.

You begin to realise that some creature is following you, as you hear the noise of twigs cracking and leaves rustling behind. Several times you turn, but can see nothing.

Pushing on South again, you are startled by the feel of some creature clamping itself to your back, and thick, scaly arms enclosing your throat. You twist and turn, until you at last dislodge the thing, and draw your sword to face a horned, armoured, four-legged beast, hissing at you. The STEALTHCLAMP rears up, its front legs possessing horny paws with long talons, and you prepare to fight. However, because of the Stealthclamp's thick armour, it will lose only *one* Strength point each time you strike a blow, rather than the usual two. You fight:

	Dexterity	*Strength*
STEALTHCLAMP:	6	9

If you win, turn to **88**.

20

Pushing your hand deep into one of the holes, you suddenly shout with pain, and at once snatch it out again. Whatever small creature inhabits the burrow has given you a painful bite – lose two Strength points. Nursing your injured hand, you hurry West again. Turn to **129**.

21

You are agile enough to avoid the bouncing, tumbling rocks, and, when the small avalanche is over, you hurry on. The tunnel turns North, and it is not long before you see an opening on your left, beyond which is daylight. You are back at the entrance, and so you head West, onto the path again, putting out your torch. Will you now go:

North? Turn to **79**
South? Turn to **183**

22

The road West is straight, and crosses dry scrubland, until it ends at a road running North-South. Will you now go:

North? Turn to **48**
South? Turn to **158**

23

The moment you touch it, the statuette comes cleanly away from the figurehead, and drops into your hand. Excited, you look into its glinting eyes for a minute, before putting the precious artefact safely into your backpack.

You hurry back from the beach to the road through the village, and hurry on North – turn to **12**.

24

Wary after your struggle against the Wolves, you cut your way North until you reach the road. Will you now take the way:

East? Turn to **116**
West? Turn to **82**

25

The road is straight and well-made, and you follow it through the thick, tangled undergrowth on either side. In places, the trailing weeds and thick, spiny bushes have grown across the road, and you hack through them as you press on. The tall ridge of Pen-Dinas, to the North, glints periodically, as the sun flashes bright barbs from its stony face.

The road ends – ahead is an empty dustbowl, cracked and parched, lifeless. The way North is at least no worse than the road you have already travelled, and so you turn North: this road is straight, well-made and raised a little from the uninviting, parched earth either side. Hurrying North, your progress is unimpeded, until you find yourself climbing over a small hill of rocks, bushes, and gorse. Looking to your right, you see that you have crossed the most Western point of the ridge, and you are soon back onto a good road, the ridge behind you.

It is not long however, before you begin to doubt the wisdom of your decision to go this way: the air becomes clammy and moist, and the road is soon little more than a good track through steaming, humid marshland. On either side are pools of bubbling mud, and torpid, stagnant water.

You stop at a junction – there is a kind of track off to the East, but it is filthy and treacherous-looking: one false step, you think, and you could be lost forever in this foul place. You continue North – turn to **186**.

26

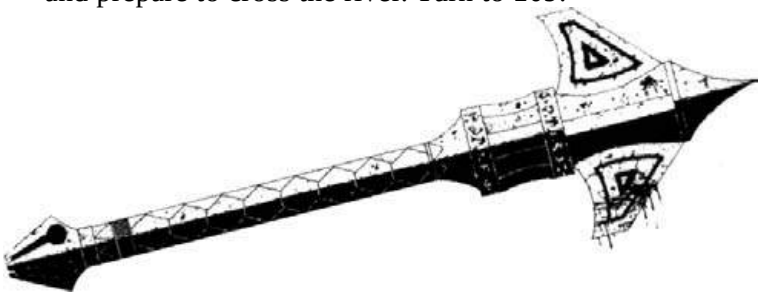
You press on again North, and then follow the path round to the East. But fear and disappointment grip your heart, as you see, not far distant, a hill rising out of the forest, surrounded by tall stones that reach up into the evening sky. West, as you look back, the sun has almost set. With a heart like stone, you mechanically climb the hill. Turn to **178**.

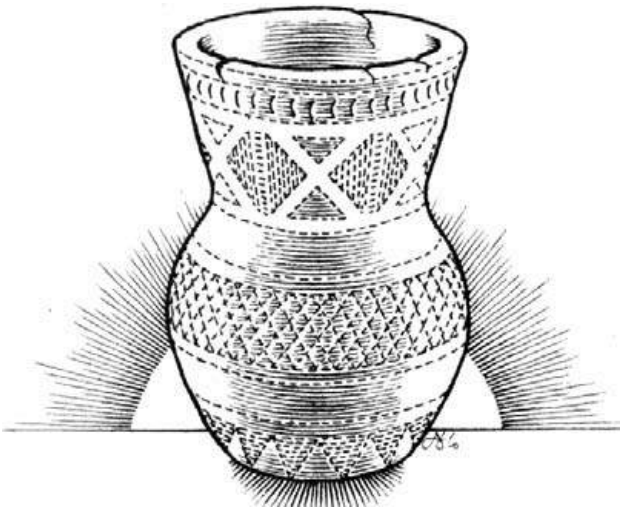
27

As you stand before the mirror, the vision becomes hazy, and fades; you have a dreamy sensation of floating through the air, and in a moment you are back on the path beneath the tree. You feel as though you have woken from a deep sleep, but you seem to be unharmed; you continue on your way: turn to **74**.

28

The Ferryman watches from his boat with cynical, detached amusement, as you loosen your backpack, and prepare to cross the river. Turn to **109**.





29

The way North is barely a track, and you have to use your sword to cut your way through the encroaching branches and vines.

Then you stop, gazing for a moment in wonder: on your left, almost hidden in the undergrowth, is the urn, crowned with crosses, exactly as Glamarye described – only that morning, though it feels like a lifetime ago. You stoop down to examine it.

If you have met the Sisters of Went, and paid their price, you will know what to do now – turn to the section which has the same number as the drops of water. If you have not met them, you may take the urn – turn to **147**; or leave it – turn to **160**.

30

A little further on, you see another track to the South. Will you now:

Go South?	Turn to **80**
Continue West?	Turn to **55**

31

You hold up the potion, and shout to the crowd that it will cure all ills. Muttering, they slowly back away, and you are led to the entrance of one of the largest huts. Your escort, still holding his bow, pulls aside the drapes, and you walk into the hut.

Seated on a pile of cushions and sacking is a powerful-looking man: and around his neck is the amber collar. His face is purple, as he drags in each breath, unable to speak; you walk up to Cador and remove the stopper from the potion of Healing, and carefully pour a few drops into his mouth. But as you do, his face contorts in agony, and his body writhes in spasms of pain – you realise, too late, that the merchant has sold you poison . . . the exile furiously raises his crossbow and fires – and your last memory is of the bolt piercing your chest. You have failed.

32

The Forest Dwarf disposed of, you glance at the sun's rays through the trees. They are reddish now, almost horizontal, and you wonder how long you were unconscious. You realise that sunset cannot now be far off, as you run North, sword at the ready.

The path North turns to the West, and you follow it until you reach a junction. North, on a hill rising above the forest,. you can see a stone circle. With leaden feet, you climb until you are on the edge of the circle. The sun is about to touch the horizon, its long rays streaking across the hill, the stones leaving pools of deep shadow, and you watch with a sinking heart as the sun begins to set. Turn to **178**.

33

Tiny creatures scuttle across your path as you walk, and strange shrieks and cries startle you. But you are not attacked, and carry on until you see that there is a new path through the trees, this time on your left. Will you now:

Go South?	Turn to **165**
Carry on West?	Turn to **30**

34

Further East, you again see a track to the South. Will you now go:

South?	Turn to **148**
East?	Turn to **62**

35

You slow down to a more comfortable pace as you reach the foothills and begin climbing. The path North is straight, although narrow, and your progress is rapid and steady. Although the sun is still bright in the clear sky, the temperature change is swift and remarkable. At first, you are glad of the cool air, after the hot and dusty track to the South, but it is not long before you realise that it has become icy-cold, and you increase your pace in an effort to keep warm.

Nearing the top of the ridge, you see that there are patches of snow on the rocks either side: you stop for a moment to look around. In the distance, straight ahead, there appears to be a road running East–West, and beyond that, a vast wooded area.

Even as you are considering this, and marvelling at the view, you are startled by a huge figure emerging from the rocks ahead. Covered with hair and powerfully muscled, the HARROCK towers above you, snarling. Swiftly drawing your sword, you prepare to fight for your life.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
HARROCK:	8	14

If you win, turn to **4**.

36

The road becomes little more than a poorly-made track as it twists Northwards into the foothills of Pen-Dinas. The track straightens, and ends at what appears to be a natural opening in the rock-face. Looking in, you can make out nothing. Beyond the length of your shadow, all is black.

If you wish to enter this gloomy cavern, turn to **59**. If you would rather skirt round it, to the West and then North, climbing the ridge, turn to **192**.

37

The way East is straight and well-made, and you make good progress. It is not long before you see that there is a new way off to your right. Will you:

Continue East?	Turn to **156**
Go South?	Turn to **103**

38

The tunnel widens and becomes lighter, and you follow it East, then North for a short way before it turns East again. You have gone only a short distance East, before you stop – there is movement ahead, and the flickering light from a hand-held torch.

As you stand in the dim, cold tunnel you see more clearly the creatures ahead. Three GRUNKS approach, muttering; one holds a torch, a sword at his side, while the others already have their swords drawn, and shields at the ready. Their faces are pallid and flat, their broad mouths twisted into an eternal grimace. The dreadful outcome of a meeting between Trolls and Hobgoblins, they have little intelligence, but some cunning. Sword and shield at

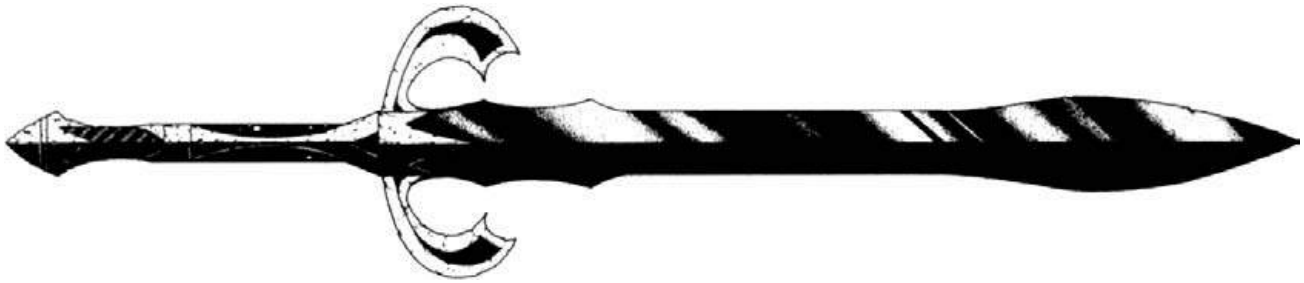
the ready, you challenge them in a clear voice that echoes down the passage. Immediately, the first hurls his torch at you, and draws his sword. You deflect the torch with your shield, and prepare to do battle. Because the tunnel is not wide enough to fight all three Grunks at once, you must fight them one at a time, until you are past them.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
FIRST GRUNK:	9	6
SECOND GRUNK:	5	8
THIRD GRUNK:	6	10

If you defeat all three, turn to **130**.

39

Very soon, the path turns to your left, and you shortly notice a number of small holes in the ground on your right. They appear to be some kind of animal burrows, but they might be worth investigating. If you wish to explore one, turn to **20**. If you would rather ignore them, and continue on your way, turn to **129**.



40

Not far along the road North, you stop as you hear muffled cries from the side of the road. Moving across, you see that a man has been bound hand and foot, and gagged, and his eyes meet yours in mute appeal. Will you:

Free him? Turn to **189**

Decide not to risk it, and continue on your way? Turn to **89**

41

At length, when you are sure that the last of the Shiktads has gone, you climb down, and continue North, until you come to a junction: a path leads to the East. Will you:

Continue North? Turn to **149**

Take the path East? Turn to **110**

42

Your arm goes in almost to your shoulder, as you feel inside. You grasp something metallic, and draw it out. Gleaming in a shaft of sunlight is a gold bracelet, and you put it on; heavy and glinting on your wrist, it must be of considerable value, and, pleased with your find, you continue. Turn to **97**.

43

Some way further on, you see another figure coming towards you, indistinct in the heat-haze. As you get closer, you see that it is a man raving to himself. His body is blistered and peeling, his lips cracked, dried blood on his chin. He appears to be in the last stages of heat exhaustion.

If you wish to give him some water from your flask, turn to **93**. If you will let him pass, to survive as best he can, turn to **63**.

44

The road passes through the waving grassland; walking along in the warm sunshine, with the light breeze on your face, you think, for a second, that it could be almost any ordinary summer's day. But then you increase your pace again, as you recall the urgency of your mission. You see that there is a track to your right, leading back South, and so you ignore that to continue East. Turn to **5**.

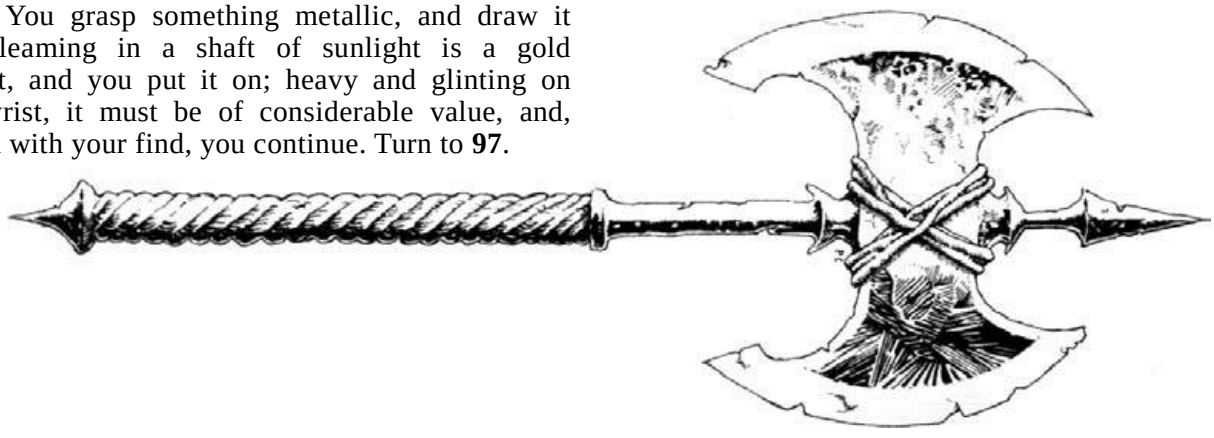
45

Close to despair, you struggle to retrieve the pouch from your backpack, and, having no idea of its properties, or of how to use it, simply hurl it at the closest attacker. As the pouch hits, the powder bursts from it – and the effect is immediate. Although you can feel nothing, the Lathlaks are completely disorientated, running into each other, falling over, and shrieking wildly.

Taking advantage of their confusion, you swiftly run in what seems to be the best direction – due North, towards Pen-Dinas. Turn to **35**.

46

Warily, you take the berries from your backpack, and hold them out at arm's length, ready to draw your sword at any moment. The Bridgekeeper inspects them, tries one, and nods, indicating that you may pass. Still suspicious, you step slowly and carefully onto the rickety bridge. Turn to **197**.



47

As you continue swinging your sword, yet more of the Lathlaks appear. They are getting through your defence increasingly often now, and you are rapidly tiring. With no magic to aid you, your situation is hopeless, and as the sweat runs into your eyes, and your movements become more laboured, the vile creatures shriek with delight. When they have finished you off, you will make a good supper for them tonight – you have failed in your quest.

48

Not very much further on, the road ends at a junction with a new road running East-West. Will you now go:

East? Turn to **37**
West? Turn to **166**

49

Unless you can solve the puzzle, to free the spirit of the skeleton and release the plate of gold, your quest is over almost before it has started. Only by gaining all four artefacts can you hope to succeed. Your choice is clear: either give up now, or return to section **195**, and work out the golden number.

50

You walk steadily West, as the sun continues its climb into the sky, and the only sounds are those of the light wind breathing through the grasses on your left, and your own footfalls on the straight, dusty road.

You pass a rough track off to your left, but ignore it, as it leads back to the ridge, and press on West until you reach a junction. You stop to wipe your brow – the sun has climbed almost to its apex, and beats down relentlessly. Will you now go:

North? Turn to **92**
West? Turn to **90**

51

The Skullsnapper dead, you carry on North, wondering what other creatures inhabit this sweltering rain-forest, until you reach a junction. North, you can hear, faintly, the sound of flowing water, while to the West, the path is much the same as the one you are now travelling. Will you go:

North? Turn to **114**
West? Turn to **155**

52

The path East is eerie; occasional sudden shrieks and screams startle you, as you press on East. But you are not faced with any foe, and follow the path through the broad leaves and tangled vines, as the path turns South.

On your left, you hear a new noise, and stop for a moment: the wind is whispering through the trees, but one tree seems to lean towards you, calling with its own breath. Will you:

Investigate? Turn to **132**
Continue on your way South? Turn to **71**

53

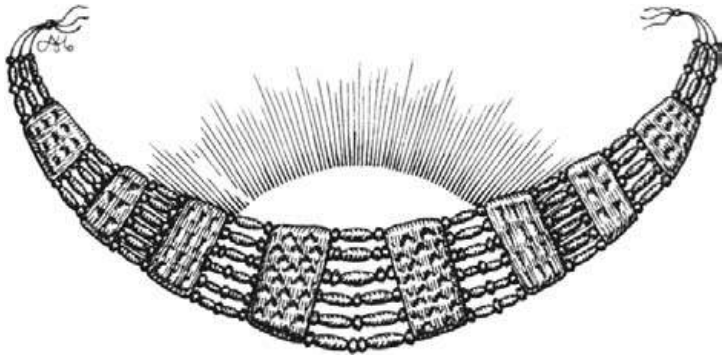
You notice, as you walk, that one of the trees has a hole in its trunk. Unlike any of the others you have seen, this one seems to have been carved out, and you wonder why. Will you:

Put your hand in to investigate? Turn to **131**
Leave it, and carry on North? Turn to **39**

54

You cut through the seal with your thumbnail, and, boldly, read aloud the words inscribed, your voice clear and resonant: “I call upon the power of Dinadan: the evil that holds this man is no more! He is free!” . . . and as you do so, your voice gains in strength, until you are howling the words, “He is free!” The final word is a demand before which the trees bend, as though struck by a gale. The people cower in terror as the amber collar abruptly leaps from the neck of Cador and falls at your feet.

You pick it up, and back away, as Cador takes deep, grateful breaths, and his colour becomes more normal. Leaving the hut, you walk East, stowing the collar safely in your backpack. The exiles are obviously daunted by so powerful a sorcerer, as Cador begins to recover. You leave the exiles’ hideout behind as you cut your way East, until you reach a good road. South, you can see a forest of twisted trees, vines, and strange plants. North, the road fades into darkness between high stone-built walls. You head South – turn to **150**.



55

As you press on through the trees, you notice that one, in contrast to the others, has some juicy-looking, plum-like fruit hanging from its branches. Will you:

Pick one, and try it? Turn to **69**
Not risk it? Turn to **112**

56

Walking South in the heavy gloom between the walls, you can see bright sunshine ahead, and hurry towards it.

As though coming out of a tunnel, you find yourself in daylight again; the air feels slightly humid now, and as you carry on South, the foliage becomes lush and green – strange broad-leaved plants that you have not seen before, and tall, brooding trees. Not far distant, you see that the path enters a wall of twisting trees and dense foliage: warily, you head towards it. Turn to **150**.

57

You walk down into the small valley. On your left, the grasses are waist-high, while on your right, the ground rises steeply. At the bottom of the valley, you notice an opening in the hillside on your right, and peer inside. It looks as though there is a tunnel into the hillside, running East, but you cannot see far into the gloom. Will you:

Continue North?	Turn to	**79**
Enter?	Turn to	**91**

58

Heading back East, it is not long before you come to the road, now on your right, from which you started your journey. Not far distant is the walled city of Valantia. Taking one last look, you continue East. Turn to **115**.

59

The clinging black cold of the cave makes you catch your breath for a moment, and you shiver; but you draw your sword and push forward into the darkness, feeling your way. You seem to be in a tunnel, and as you move on, you are relieved that there is a little light, given off by the rocks themselves.

After a short time, you can go no further forward, but can see that there are tunnels going off both to your left and right. You can make out little in either direction; however, you must now make a choice. Will you take the tunnel to the:

East?	Turn to	**2**
West?	Turn to	**121**

60

Still unsure whether or not this is a mirage, you hand over the gold piece, and take the tin of water. You take a cautious sip, and are more than a little surprised to find it very refreshing. Gain four Strength points. You drain the rest, and turn to hand back the cup – but the veiled man is no longer anywhere in sight.

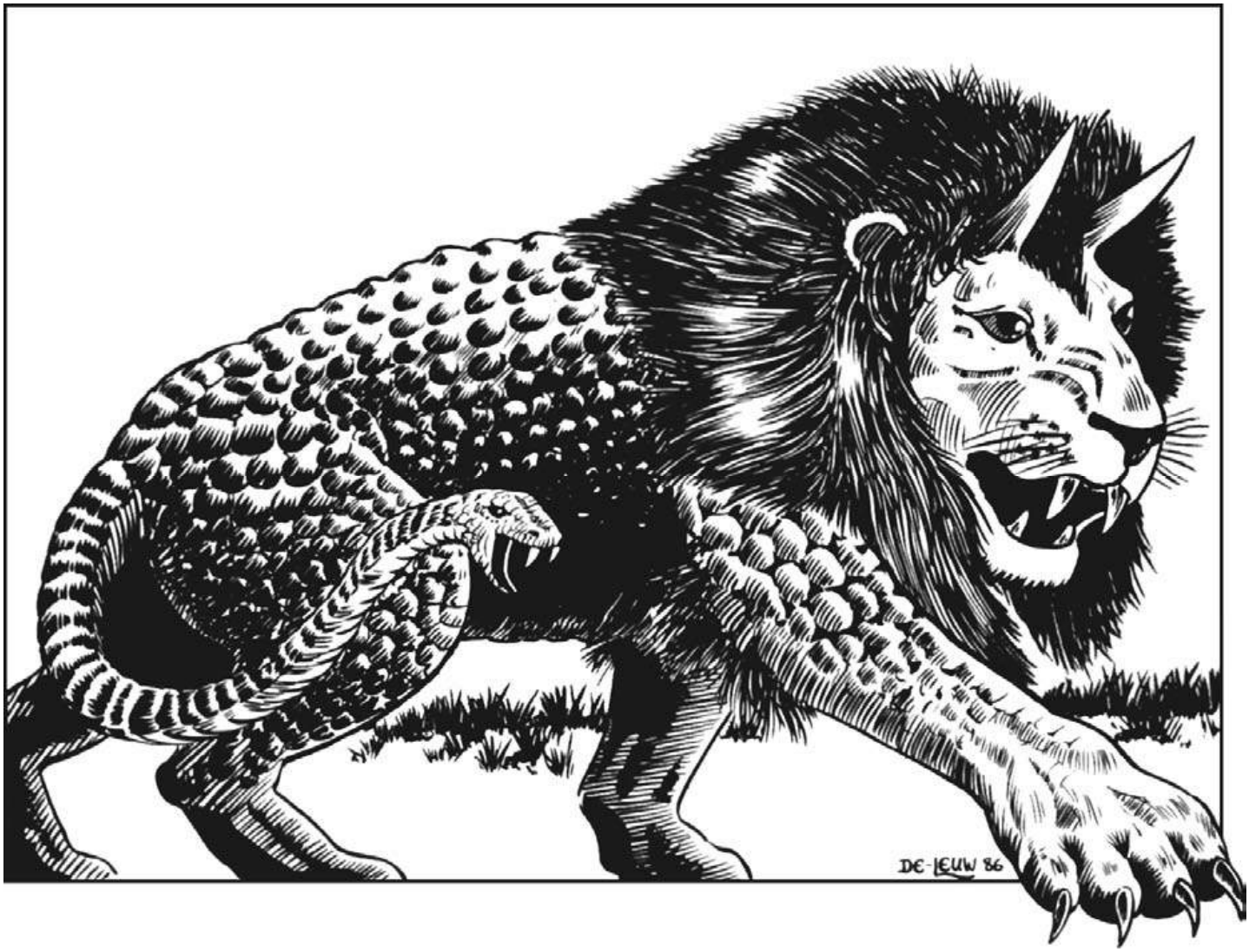
Smiling to yourself, feeling cool and clear-headed, you drop the cup and push on with new energy between the towering rock-faces, North. Turn to **43**.

61

At least the way North is wide and easy to follow, and you press on, until a deep-throated roar from the trees at the side stops you in your tracks.

A massive animal pads out of the undergrowth, its body covered in thick scales, its great lion's head crowned with two sharp horns. Sword and shield at the ready, you prepare to do battle with this fierce enemy, and see that its tail ends in a snake's head, weaving, ready to strike. This is a SHIKTAD.

Because the Shiktad has two means of attack, you must throw twice for it to determine the course of



your fight. You throw for the Shiktad, and for yourself, as normal, and adjust Strength scores. You then throw a second time for the Shiktad: if its fighting power is now greater than the one you have just thrown for yourself in this round, its snake's head has struck, and again you lose two Strength points, before throwing for the creature and yourself again, and repeating the process.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
SHIKTAD:	10	12

If you survive this fierce battle, turn to **151**.

62

Some way on, you notice that a track runs off to your left. Will you:

Try the way North?	Turn to **53**
Continue East?	Turn to **87**

63

The man brushes against you as he staggers past, and you watch as he slowly fades into the hazy, dusty air. You put him out of your mind, as you turn your face North again, and push your feet into the soft sand, moving on one slow pace at a time. Turn to **180**.

64

You see no sign of life as you walk along the dusty road, and you continue until you reach a crossroads. The road South appears to lead directly back to the ridge, so will you now:

Continue East?	Turn to **44**
Take the road North?	Turn to **40**

65

The tunnel South is not long, and soon turns East; although it is quite wide, the walls are deeply cracked, and the ground is littered with rocks. A sudden noise from your right startles you, and you look up to see a whole section of rock-face coming away; throw two dice. If the total is the same as, or greater than your Dexterity score, turn to **173**. If it is less, turn to **140**.

66

The road is straight and well-made, and you quickly make your way along it, stopping when you see that a road runs off to the South. Will you:

Continue West?	Turn to **166**
Take the road South?	Turn to **3**

67

The path is barely discernible in what little light filters through the choking vegetation, but you are able to follow it, until it shortly turns North, and you soon find yourself on the river-bank again, upstream of where you left it. This is a much more promising place to cross, as the river is only a few yards wide here, and does not appear to be deep, as the water gushes and tumbles around rocks and bushes.

Wading in, you reach the North bank safely, and turn to follow the bank East, back to the other crossing point. The river widens and deepens as you walk, until you stop opposite the clearing. The path continues North on this side of the river, and so you head that way – turn to **61**.

68

Out of the small cave and back at the junction, will you take the tunnel to the:

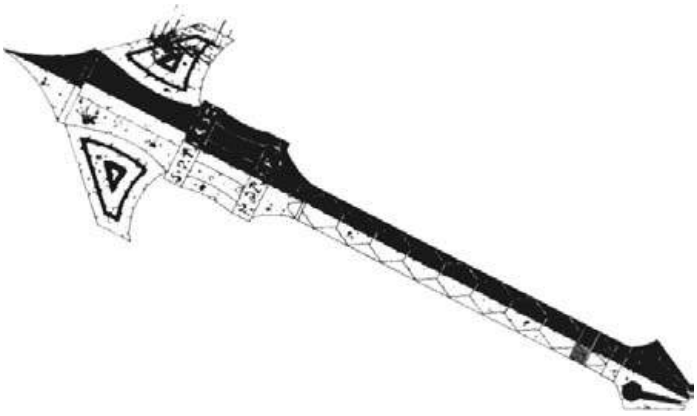
North?	Turn to **16**
South?	Turn to **193**

69

You take a cautious bite – but the fruit tastes delicious, and you feel new energy surging through you. Gain four Strength points, and turn to **112**.

70

Retracing your steps, you head North, and then West, and, ignoring the path to your right down which you first came, continue West. Turn to **19**.



71

As you push on through the increasingly dense woodland, you hear, above the high-pitched shrieks and squeals in the background, the sound of something large and heavy crashing through the foliage. Drawing your sword, you ready yourself for a fight – but nevertheless take a few paces back, as a massive FOREST LIZARD stumbles out of the shadows of the forest, and fixes its gaze on you.

The creature is well-armoured, its long scaly snout sniffing your scent, as its claws reach out to rip you limb from limb. You stand your ground, sword and shield held high, as the great beast lumbers towards you. Because of its armoured body, deduct

only one point of damage each time you score a blow in this fight; and because the Lizard is so powerful, deduct three Strength points for each round of fighting that you lose.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
FOREST LIZARD:	8	14

If you win, turn to **128**.

72

You take a small, careful bite – but the strange fruit tastes delicious, and you enthusiastically finish it and eat another. Gain four Strength points, as you press on with new enthusiasm and energy. Turn to **159**.

73

A sharp pain shoots up your arm as you feel into the hole, and you cry out, snatching back your hand. Some creature has given you a nasty bite, and your hand begins to swell. Lose two Strength points. You decide against investigating any of the others – turn to **196**.

74

Going South, you shortly arrive at a junction in the forest path. Will you now go:

East?	Turn to	**52**
West?	Turn to	**19**

75

The Bridgekeeper is fast, strong, and dangerous with both spear and blade; though you hold your ground, you know that this will be a tough fight to the death.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
BRIDGEKEEPER:	11	13

If you manage to defeat him, you may step onto the bridge – turn to **197**.

76

The road West is well-made, and you make good progress. It is eerily quiet as you walk, the only sound the whispering of tall grasses, moving in the breeze on your left. You follow the road until you arrive at a junction. Will you:

Go North?	Turn to	**92**
Continue West?	Turn to	**90**

77

Highly suspicious of this merchant and his potions, you offer only two gold pieces. The man gives another great gurgling laugh, and willingly takes them, before picking up his lamp and moving swiftly into the shadows at the back of his hut. Feeling slightly foolish, you stow the potion carefully in your backpack and return to the harsh landscape beyond. Turn to **85**.

78

The Gryphon defeated, you continue North. The sun sears your head and shoulders as you drive yourself along the soft, dusty path, and the rock walls either side draw closer. The ground slopes gently downwards; behind you, the dust hangs still in the dry, hazy air as you drag yourself onwards.

After a minute, or an hour – you cannot be sure – you approach a man, swathed in black veils. He holds out a metal cup: "Fresh water, one gold piece," you hear, though you cannot make out a face behind the thick veils. Your own water flask is not yet empty, but if you wish to pay for the tin of water, turn to **60**. If you would rather ignore him, and continue North, turn to **43**.

79

You walk steadily up the gentle incline, until you are on flat ground again. Shortly, the path stops: the road runs East-West. Will you now go:

East?	Turn to **156**
West?	Turn to **66**

80

You find that the track soon turns to the East, and hurry through the dense foliage. But you have to stop sharply as you realise that thin tendrils have curled round your leg, and you feel a sudden pain. You madly cut away the disgusting, blood-sucking creepers, and limp clear of them to look at the numerous painful puncture-marks in your calf. Roll one dice, and lose that many Strength points. If you are still alive, turn to **190**.

81

Your way forward blocked, you have no alternative but to turn round and go back to the last junction. At this junction, will you now go:

North?	Turn to **57**
Continue West?	Turn to **22**

82

After only a short distance along the road West, you reach a junction. So far, all has been silent, only a light breeze disturbing the grasses to your left, and raising dust from your footsteps. Ahead, and to the North, the way looks equally deserted. Will you go:

North?	Turn to **92**
Continue West?	Turn to **90**

83

It is not long before you realise why the West wind is damp and fresh. To your left is a small harbour, where a number of small boats are beached. To investigate, turn to **124**. If you prefer to continue on your way North, turn to **12**.

84

As you suspected, the road turns East again a little distance further, and as you follow it, the fierce gale gradually subsides. You continue East, on the lookout for more Spikehurlers, for some way, until the road begins to deteriorate into a barely visible track through the clinging undergrowth and rock outcrops.

A movement catches your eye, and you stop, sword at the ready. After a moment, there is a high-pitched, excited chattering, at first from your left, then behind you. Two small, Goblin-like creatures suddenly step out in front of you, and you wheel round as more appear on either side of, and behind you. In a moment, you are surrounded by dozens of these creatures, whose exceptionally long hands identify them as LATHLAKS.

Grinning evilly, they dart at you – although

unarmed, their power is in their hands: a mere touch from the long fingers causes a strength-sapping burn, enough of which will kill. You swing your sword, trying to keep them at bay, but eventually, you will weaken, and they will be upon you – your situation is desperate! Turn to **105**.

85

Outside the merchant's ramshackle but again, will you now:

Go back East?	Turn to	**58**
Continue West?	Turn to	**25**

86

You softly whisper the number, almost like a blessing: at once the air becomes cold and still – then, after a moment, a great blast of ice-cold wind begins whirling round the cavern like a tornado. Gold pieces and jewellery are sucked up and scattered around the cave, and you put up your shield to protect yourself against the flying objects, trying to keep your feet.

A few seconds later, all is suddenly quiet again: you lower your shield – the golden plate has slipped from the chest of the skeleton, and you pick it up at once, and stow it safely in your backpack. You have the first of the artefacts!

You do not touch the sword, shield, or any of the other objects in the cave, but count out twenty gold pieces for yourself before returning South, and then East. You pass the tunnel through which you entered, on your right, and continue East; but after only a short distance, you stop – there is a tunnel on your left. It is, as far as you can make out, quite straight, and you think you can make out daylight in the distance. Will you:

Try the tunnel North?	Turn to	**120**
Continue East?	Turn to	**38**

87

The remainder of your walk East is brief and without incident, and you soon reach a junction with a broad path running North-South. You push on North, deeper into the forest; ahead of you, you can faintly hear the sound of flowing water. Turn to **114**.

88

Not much further South, you stop. A great chasm yawns before you, across which is a bridge made of slats cut from the trees, and rope.

As you look at this narrow bridge, wondering how safe it is, a powerful man steps out in front of you, blocking your path. Dressed in animal skins, and carrying a long spear in one hand, and a vicious-looking blade in the other, he eyes you, his face shadowed by the shafts of sun glancing through the trees. "I keep this bridge, Stranger," he says, his voice deep and muffled. "I will allow you to pass on payment of a clutch of algethan berries." If you have collected a clutch of berries in your travels, and wish to hand them over to this sinister-looking character, turn to **46**. If you have not, or prefer to fight, turn to **75**.

89

As you follow the road North, the air becomes increasingly damp and humid, and the vegetation changes to exotic plants with broad green leaves. The trees increase in number, and soon you are moving along a path into a dense, steaming rain-forest. Strange harsh cries and shrieks fill the air, and brightly-coloured birds and butterflies flit deftly through the trees.

Although you are wary, no creature steps out to attack, and you continue quickly until you come to a junction. Will you now go:

East?	Turn to	**98**
Continue North?	Turn to	**176**

90

Although the road is straight, and you make good progress, you become aware of the landscape changing as you progress. The long waving grasses die out, and the road becomes a barely discernible track, as either side of you, the land is parched and bare, cracked and dusty.

But, as you continue, you feel a light mist on your face, warm and humid; and shortly, the track has all but disappeared, as the ground now becomes moist, heavy mud. As you push on steadily West, the ground becomes softer, until you are sinking almost to your knees in steaming marshland. Slowly dragging each leg in turn out of the clinging mud, you press on, through the bubbling, steaming marsh.

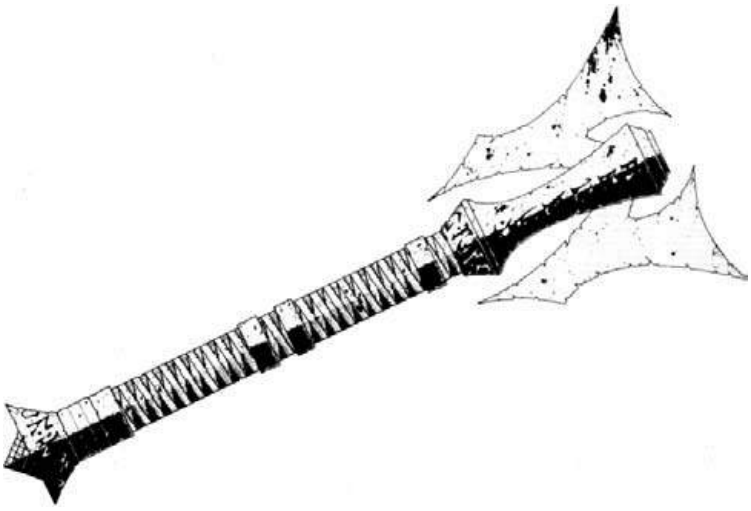
You are relieved when the track ends at another, running North-South, which seems much firmer. Having no wish to go back South, you turn North along a firm path through the bubbling swamp. Turn to **186**.

91

You can make out little in the darkness, and swiftly pull some dry twigs and grasses from the West side of the road. You tie them into a long, fairly thick bundle, and then take out your flint, and strike sparks from a rock. You soon have a good makeshift torch, and use it to light your way as you enter the cave.

You are in a narrow tunnel going East – but very soon it ends, and you must decide which way to go now. Will you try the tunnel:

North?	Turn to	**157**
South?	Turn to	**65**



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92

As you walk North, the heat increases. You look up to see the blood-red sun climbing towards its highest point, its rays beating down on your face. The foliage gradually dies away, and you are walking between tall rock-faces, along a path that is little more now than a sandy track. The orange dust is in your hair, your eyes, your mouth – and you pause for a moment to drink before continuing.

Determinedly pushing forward, your senses dulled by the heat and dust, you belatedly become aware of a fierce screaming from above – and you look up, shielding your eyes, to see a GRYPHON diving at you out of the sun.

With the body of a lion, but the face, wings and talons of an eagle, the Gryphon swoops past you, and then effortlessly climbs into the sky. It hovers for a moment, before diving again, beak and talons ready to tear you to shreds. You draw your sword – this will not be an easy fight.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
GRYPHON	11	14

If you survive this battle, turn to **78**.

93

You pour a little of your precious water over his face and into his mouth, and his eyes slowly begin to focus. He grasps at your flask, madness in his features, and you have to hold it firmly, allowing only a little water at a time.

Gradually, he seems to become more rational – but without warning, he hits you hard in the face, and staggers off South again. You get to your feet, more angry than hurt, and watch as he disappears into the haze. Lose one Strength point. Rubbing your chin, you carry on North, through the baking desert. Turn to **180**.

94

It is not long before you are back at the crossroads. This time, will you go:

East?	Turn to **44**
West?	Turn to **76**

95

You realise almost immediately, as you plunge into the turbulent water, that you have made a bad decision. Swimming desperately, you are nevertheless swept quickly downstream, East, until the river widens and the current eases. You are at last able to grab hold of an overhanging branch on the North bank, and haul yourself out, dripping wet. Checking your backpack, you see that any provisions you had are now soaked and useless, and, angry with yourself, you walk back upstream until you can see the clearing again on the South bank.

There is a path North on this side, and so, with a feeling of hopelessness, you hurry that way. Turn to **61**.

96

The path South very soon turns to the East again, and you have to struggle through thick clumps of vegetation. Something snags your leg, and you look down to see thin tendrils wrapping themselves round your ankle, and feel a burning pain. Swiftly you cut away the bloodsucking creepers, and limp off to look at your leg. It is beginning to swell and redden, and you see the numerous puncture-marks the foul creepers have left in your skin. Roll one dice and lose that many Strength points. If you are still alive, turn to **153**.

97

The track turns to the West again, and as you move through the alternating sunlight and gloom of the forest, your attention is caught by a number of small holes in the ground on your right. They look as though they are animal burrows, but you think they might be worth investigating. If you wish to put your hand in one, turn to **73**. If you wish to ignore them, turn to **196**.

98

Only a short way along the path, you notice that one of the trees is quite different to the others, with ripe, plum-like fruit hanging invitingly from its branches. Will you:

Pick one, and try it?	Turn to **72**
Not risk it, and carry on East?	Turn to **159**

99

Limping on West, you find that the track soon turns North again, until you come out onto a path you recognise. You are now West of where you originally left the main route, and you angrily turn and retrace your steps, East. Turn to **34**.

100

Reluctantly, you count out five pieces of gold, and hand them over. The ferryman looks at them carefully, then suddenly looks up at you, sneers and abruptly pushes off downstream, still clutching his gold, and cackling with laughter as you stand stranded on the South bank of the river. You are furious, but there is nothing you can do, as he disappears East, into the depths of the rain-forest. You have no choice now but to wade across – turn to **109**.

101

The Marsh Monster dead, you struggle on North, and gradually the steamy, oppressive atmosphere begins to clear. Shortly, you are on a well-made road again, and you stop for a few moments to scrub away some of the thick mud from your boots.

The road heads directly North through the now-familiar thick brambles and tangled undergrowth; but after a time, your attention is caught by a narrow path off to your right. The path ends at a small, weather-beaten hut. Will you:

Investigate further?	Turn to **174**
Continue North?	Turn to **162**

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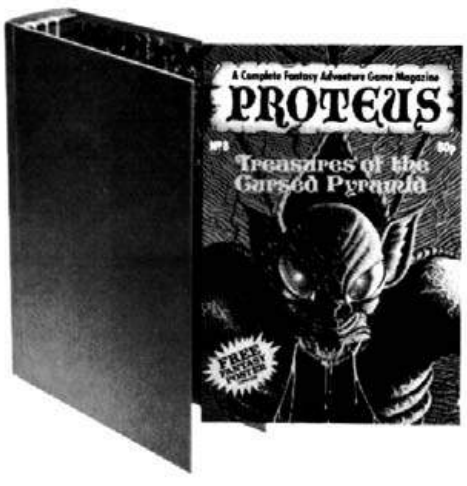

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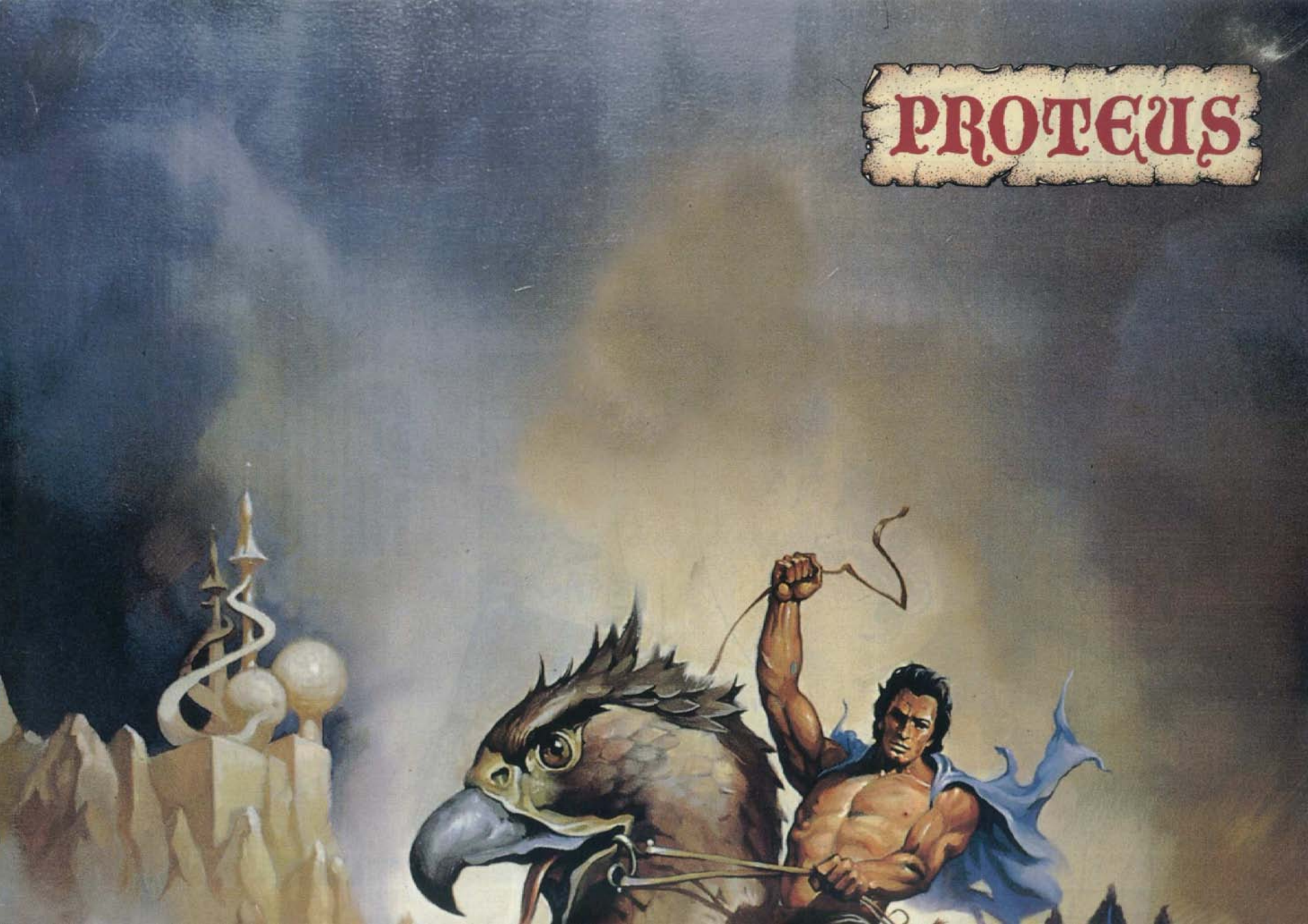

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102

The instant you touch it, a searing pain screams from your fingertip to your toes, and for several seconds you are fixed to the spot, your mouth open in a silent shriek of agony.

At last, the power of the statuette releases you, and you collapse. Lose seven Strength points. If you are still alive, you may now try the other foot – turn to the appropriate section.

103

You descend into a small valley; on your right, the vegetation is waist-high, while on your left, the ground steadily rises as you walk. A small opening in the hillside on your left soon catches your attention, and you peer into the gloom. Will you:

Enter?	Turn to	**91**
Continue South?	Turn to	**183**

104

You are on a well-made road, which goes due North through the fields of long grass, and you follow it until you arrive at a crossroads. Will you go:

North?	Turn to	**40**
East?	Turn to	**44**
West?	Turn to	**76**

105

Whirling your sword about you, keeping the Lathlaks at bay, you begin to feel the effect of the effort, as the sun beats down. The high-pitched chattering turns to shrieks of manic laughter as first one, then another of the creatures strikes you, causing intense pain – lose four Strength points.

Did you take the pouch of 'magic powder' that the Valantian citizen offered? If so, turn to **45**. If not, turn to **138**.

106

He is delighted at your acceptance, as he pockets the gold, thanking and praising you repeatedly, telling you again of his great skill. You cut him short, and suggests he begins work. "Of course, of course, at once," he whines, "very important, very skilled work—" he stops chattering as he sees your threatening look, and takes a piece of stone from his workbench.

In a remarkably short time, he has fashioned the rough stone into a small block, not much bigger than your hand, into which he now carves a number of indentations. Blowing away the excess dust, he gives the stone a wipe with his sleeve, and hands it to you, looking nervous and pleased with himself at the same time. You consider the stone doubtfully: it does not look much like a key – but then the artificer did say it was special.

You put the stone into your backpack and leave, to continue North again – turn to **141**.

107

As swiftly as you can, you race round the circle, placing one of the artefacts at each point of the compass. You can feel the ground trembling beneath your feet, causing you to trip and fall, as you desperately finish your task, and lean back against one of the great stones, exhausted and sweating.

As the sun sets, there is a sudden explosion from the barrow at the centre of the enchanted circle, and Uthergan springs, hissing and snarling, from the place he has been buried for so long. The cavernous, skeletal face moves slowly, reptile-like, as the ridged body pulses in the dying sunlight. Twisted arms stretch out, as his thin tail lashes the air. The Lord of Chaos has returned!

Petrified, you can only watch, as Uthergan draws himself up, surveying his place of interment. The snarling, triumphant features turn to you, regarding you with contempt – but as the last rays of the sun cross the enchanted circle, they flash from the golden plate, to the eyes of the statuette, to the amber collar, and finally to the cross inscribed on the urn. The beam from the cross strikes as straight as a sword-thrust, blood-red, into Uthergan's face. Transfixed, you watch as Uthergan howls with pain before this beam, twisting and jerking spasmodically, until, with a final unearthly bellow, the would-be Lord of Chaos falls to the earth again, his body still pierced by the beam. Slowly, as you watch, the ghastly features begin to crack, the limbs to shrivel – until, as the sun drops below the horizon, there is only a pile of dust and ashes in the enchanted circle. Turn to **200**.

108

Will you now:

Continue North?	Turn to	**7**
Return South?	Turn to	**177**

109

Holding your backpack above you, you step into the warm, flowing water. The current is not strong here, and you are relieved, as you approach the middle, that the water does not come up much higher than your chest. But your relief turns quickly to alarm as you step on something slippery, and lose your balance. Roll two dice: if the score is the same as, or greater than your Dexterity score, turn to **134**. If it is less, turn to **198**.

110

The path is easy to follow, and you make good progress. It turns to your left, and you follow it North, aware that your delay has cost time, as the sun sinks lower.

There is a track on your right, as you hurry on Northwards, but directly ahead of you is a hill that rises above the trees. Tall stones push up towards the sky, making a circle, and as the sun glows redder, and drops until it almost touches the horizon, you slowly climb the hill, helpless. Turn to **178**.

111

You try one of the berries – it has a strong aromatic flavour, and you immediately feel refreshed, confident, and vigorous. You eat the remaining berries, and see that the wound in your shoulder has magically healed! You wonder what tree or bush they came from, as you prepare to leave the hut. Gain five Strength points for the vigour the magic berries have given you, as you go back out and carry on North – turn to **162**.

112

There is a junction not far distant, and you soon reach it. The path is broader, running North–South, and you head North, deeper into the forest – turn to **176**.

113

The path South shortly turns East, and, weary now, as the sun sinks ever lower, you press on until you again see that you have a choice of ways to go. North, the path is narrow and unpromising, while the way East looks much the same as the path you are now following. At this junction, will you:

Try the path North?	Turn to **29**
Continue East?	Turn to **154**

114

The sound of rushing water gets steadily more distinct as you push your way North, until the trees abruptly part like a curtain, and you step onto the grassy bank of a river.

Facing you is a tall, thin man, standing in a flat-bottomed boat, a long pole in his hand. He regards you quizzically. “The river is treacherous, Stranger,” he says. “I will ferry you across for five gold pieces.”

You think about this offer; the price seems much too high – but the river *is* rather wide, though it does not appear to be too deep. Will you:

Pay the Ferryman (if you have the gold)?	Turn to **100**
Ignore his offer and wade across?	Turn to **28**
Draw your sword against him?	Turn to **179**

115

The road is good, and you can see Valantia on the horizon to your right, and the ridge still distant on your left. Soon the road turns sharply North, and you press on. But in the distance, you can make out what appears to be a figure approaching – you slow down, scrutinizing the bedraggled young man who staggers towards you. As he approaches, you realise that he is barely conscious, his face and body streaked with dirt and blood. You gently give him a few drops of your precious water, and his eyes seem for a few moments to focus on you.

It seems, from his fitful, disjointed phrases, that he is a citizen of Valantia, and ventured into Kaercaradduc in a lone effort to discover the four artefacts.

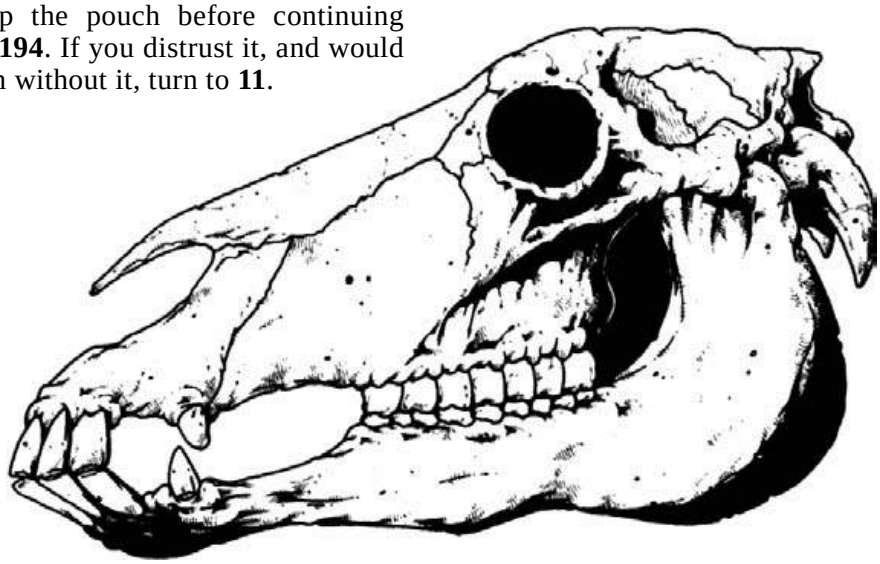
“Almost home now,” he stutters, his teeth chattering despite the heat, “soon be home.”

You ask him urgently what he has found, but he can barely speak; then, for a few moments, he

becomes lucid: “Found none of them,” he mumbles, “only madmen and wild beasts there. Get home now.”

You allow a few more drops of water onto his parched lips, and tell him that your quest is the same as his. Slowly, leaning on you, he speaks more clearly – but quietly, as though he were talking to himself: “Keep North, to the caves, not East . . . Spirits of the dead . . . creatures from beneath the earth . . . His voice trails off, and in a sudden spasm, he reaches for his sword – but the scabbard is empty. His body sags against you, as his fingers scrabble at his tunic pockets. Finally he produces a small pouch, and presses it on you, giggling. “Magic powder,” he laughs. “Great help.” The pouch falls from his hand as he releases his grip and slowly, step by step, continues South, back to Valantia.

Will you pick up the pouch before continuing North? If so, turn to **194**. If you distrust it, and would rather continue North without it, turn to **11**.



116

You travel some way along the road East, passing a rough track on your right that leads through the waving grasses back to the ridge, until you reach a crossroads. The Road South, although good, leads back to the ridge, so you must now decide whether to continue East, or to try the way North. Will you go:

East? Turn to **44**
North? Turn to **40**

117

Slowly your senses return. You are walking along a straight, dusty road, and approaching a small village. You stop, and take a long drink of water from your flask. From the Sun’s position, you realise that you are heading due North, along the road you had considered taking a few moments ago. The village ahead is little more than a scattered collection of low, stone-built shelters, and mud huts. As you get closer, bearded and unkempt men appear briefly at the roadside, before dodging back out of sight. Bony, snarling dogs approach, and dash away as you raise your hand. A woman, dressed in animal skins, quickly moves out of sight, dragging two small children with her.

The wind is freshening from the West – strangely it feels moist and salty, as you move into the village. The first two shelters you pass, on your right, seem to have been abandoned, but outside the next hut, on your left, a man sits on the ground, chipping away at a piece of stone with another, in an effort to make a crude dagger. He continues working, apparently quite unaware of your presence. Will you:

Approach him, and offer help? Turn to **171**
Ignore him, and continue North? Turn to **83**

118

You are unable to move quickly enough, and a large rock hits you hard on the leg, knocking you to the ground. Lose two Strength points.

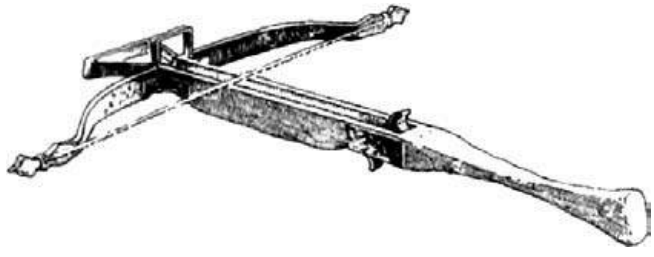
Although hurt, you are glad to see that the tunnel has not been blocked by the fall, and you are soon on your feet again, clambering over the rocks. The tunnel turns to the North, and shortly you see an opening on your left, at the end of which is daylight. You are back at the entrance, and so you return along the short tunnel West, onto the road again, and extinguish your torch. Will you now go:

North? Turn to **79**
South? Turn to **183**

119

The battle over, you stop to recover your breath. Putting your sword away, you look around to see, in the flickering light, that most of the potions and ornaments have been smashed as you fought.

There is also something else – the lamp has been knocked to the floor, and a small plume of smoke is rising. You realise that you have achieved nothing by your action, and quickly leave the hut before the fire takes hold. Turn to **85**.

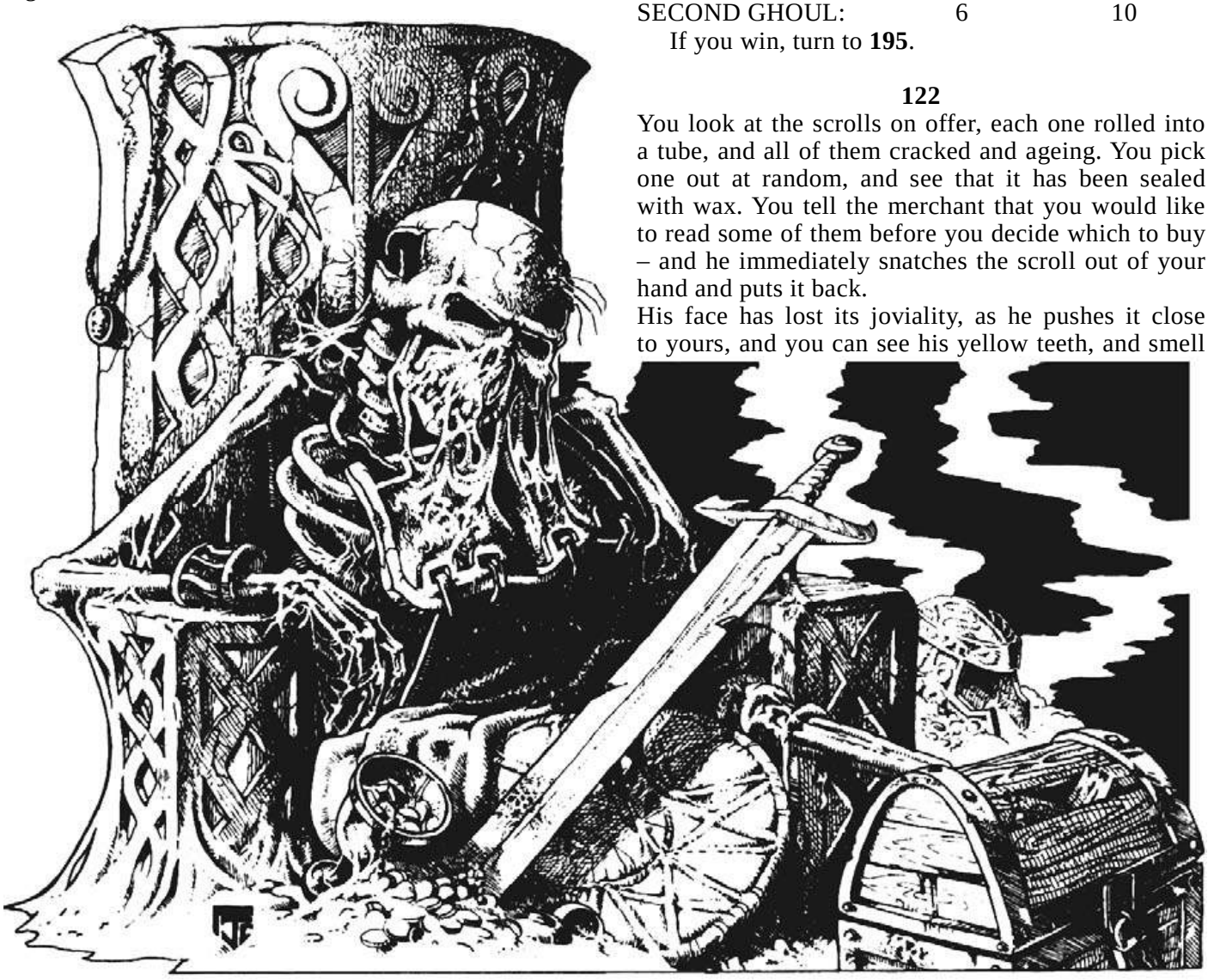


120

The way North is straight, and the light becomes stronger as you walk, ready to draw your sword at any moment. The ground slopes upwards, and your breathing becomes laboured as you steadily climb.

Ahead of you, daylight beckons, and you push yourself on, finally scrabbling on your hands and knees up the steep incline. You reach the end of the tunnel at last, and walk out of the damp blackness into the bright rays of the sun. You are now on the North side of the ridge, and before you is a rocky landscape, dipping into a vast field of waving grasses. Beyond that, there seems to be a good road running East-West, but, as you are about to move forward, a dull thundering sound alerts you to danger – from above, a rock fall is clattering towards you, steadily gathering momentum as boulders, trees and loose earth flow down like a suffocating river.

You turn at once, to head back into the tunnel – and lose your footing! Rolling, bouncing and tumbling, you land, bruised and bloodied, in the tall grasses you saw at the base of the ridge. Lose five Strength points. Your shield covering you, you wait until the landslide has run its course, before venturing a look. You have been lucky – boulders the size of a house have missed you, and stopped in the long grass. Slowly, you pick yourself up and check your weapons and provisions before continuing North – turn to **168**.



121

The tunnel West is hardly wide enough for you to move, and you make slow, cautious progress. Soon, however it turns sharply to your right: the light improves a little, and the tunnel widens, until eventually it opens out into a small cave – and a shudder passes through you. A skeleton lies collapsed into an ornately-carved chair, a sword and shield across its knees. There are hundreds of gold pieces scattered around the base of the chair, and a locked wooden casket, the lid of which has been smashed. But the golden plate strapped onto the skeleton's chest catches your eye at once, and you move forward to examine it more closely.

As you step through the gold and ornaments piled on the floor, a sudden wild howling fills the cavern, making the hairs on your neck prickle, and sending a bolt of cold fear through you. Swiftly turning, you find yourself facing a ghastly sight – two figures stand at the cave entrance, wearing plate mail and helmets, and each armed with a sword. But their flesh is rotting from their bones, and their movements are slow and awkward as they approach. Taking a deep breath, you prepare to fight these GHOULS. They attack one at a time.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
FIRST GHOUL:	5	6
SECOND GHOUL:	6	10

If you win, turn to **195**.

122

You look at the scrolls on offer, each one rolled into a tube, and all of them cracked and ageing. You pick one out at random, and see that it has been sealed with wax. You tell the merchant that you would like to read some of them before you decide which to buy – and he immediately snatches the scroll out of your hand and puts it back.

His face has lost its joviality, as he pushes it close to yours, and you can see his yellow teeth, and smell

his foul breath. “Ten gold pieces!” he snarls. “You can read after you’ve paid.”

You do not like or trust this character at all. Will you:

Attack him? Turn to **169**
Pay for the scroll, and leave? Turn to **144**

123

You follow him inside, as he gabbles away, and take a quick look round. The tables and chairs have been well-made, but the place looks as though it has not been cleaned for years. Various oddly-shaped pieces of stone, metal and wood are stacked in piles, and there is a long wooden bench against one wall. The man hurries over to this bench now, sweeping away wood and stone chippings, muttering to himself.

He takes down a chisel from the wall, and a selection of mallets: “I can make you a key,” he says, “a very special key – it may be of great use to you. Only four gold pieces,” he quickly adds. Will you:

Accept his offer (if you have enough gold pieces)? Turn to **106**
Reject it and leave, to continue North? Turn to **141**

124

The beach is strewn with seaweed, and most of the small boats are in poor shape. You climb aboard the nearest but discover nothing other than nets, lobster pots and crude spears. Disappointed, you return to the beach, and look again. One of the boats has a figurehead, and, as you look at this more closely, you see that set into the figurehead is a small statuette, eyes glinting, exactly as Glamarye described. And beneath it is a small plaque, into which is inscribed:

“Touch the Left foot.
Touch not the Right foot.
Both these statements are true.”

You think back to Glamarye’s words: the statuette is “bounded in lies” – all the statements must be false. Will you touch:

The Right foot of the statuette? Turn to **23**
The Left foot? Turn to **102**

125

The walls press in either side of you as you go North, but there is light ahead; the walls abruptly end, and very soon the road turns to the West, crossing dry earth which supports only choking weeds, nettles, and lifeless trees.

You stop when you reach a junction: South, the road slopes down gently into a small valley, while the road also continues due West. Will you now go:

South? Turn to **103**
West? Turn to **66**

126

You are taken East, through thick bracken, and then along a track that winds its way East and ends at a

broad clearing. You note the jumbled collection of poorly-made huts, and the ragged, undernourished men, women and children, who gradually crowd round to stare at you.

They begin talking rapidly, arguing amongst themselves, and you are alarmed at talk of sacrificing you to appease the Gods. You turn to see your escort aiming a loaded bow at your back, and wait. At length the excited chatter subsides, and your escort moves forward, lowering his crossbow. "Our leader, Cador, has found a collar of amber," he tells you. "Legend says that the collar gives its wearer great powers. But last night, he placed it round his neck, and now it chokes him. You are strong – but do you have a sorcerer's power to help us?"

You realise that you are close to one of the four artefacts, and desperately try to think. Did you buy any of the merchant's wares? If so, turn to **142**. If not, turn to **199**.

127

The rope-ladder swings alarmingly as you climb, but as you reach the top, pushing aside the thick leaves and branches, you see an opening in the trunk, and climb through into a room carved from the heart of the tree. Other small holes allow light in, and you look around the small, circular room.

The room is apparently empty – except for a wooden-framed, circular mirror on one wall, and beneath that, a small bottle of black liquid standing on the ground. However, there is also, you notice, a metal ring set into the floor. Will you:

Drink the liquid?	Turn to **164**
Pull the ring?	Turn to **175**
Leave, and continue South?	Turn to **74**

128

You force your way through the steaming jungle as you head South, and soon the narrow track turns West. The path becomes wider again, and easier to follow, as you hurry West, but your footsteps falter, as, ahead of you, you see a hill rising out of the rain-forest, circled by great stones. The sun is dipping towards the horizon now, and you walk slowly forward, a feeling of dread weighing down your movements. Turn to **178**.

129

Not much further, the way turns South, and comes to an end. You have to push and cut your way through the foliage, until you emerge onto a wider path. You realise, almost at once, that you are on the main route again, West of where you originally left it, and turn to retrace your footsteps East. Ignoring the path North this time, you press on East. Turn to **87**.

130

Moving swiftly past the dead Grunks, you soon find that the tunnel turns North. As you hurry North, you realise that the tunnel is sloping quite sharply downwards, and you have to brace yourself against the narrowing walls to avoid falling. But, directly ahead, there is light! Using your shield as a sledge, you hurtle down the tunnel, until you fall in a heap in a field of long grass.

For some minutes, you stay exactly where you have fallen, as the sun once again strikes fire into your eyes. You slowly get to your feet, unhurt but a little puzzled. Behind you is the ridge of Pen-Dinas, but directly ahead is a good road through the grasses, level ground heading directly North. After only a moment's hesitation, you follow this road North. Turn to **104**.

131

With great caution, you push your hand into the hole; it is deep, and you feel around until your hand touches something metallic. You draw out your discovery – a heavy gold bracelet. Pleased with this valuable find, you continue. Turn to **39**.

132

Moving into the trees at the side of the path, it seems to you that one of them is indeed speaking directly to you, sighing gently, urging, "Return, return, your time is short . . ." Will you:

Go back?	Turn to **70**
Ignore this, and continue South?	Turn to **71**

133

You hand over the gold, and the harsh whispers rise and fall again, washing over you: "We are the Sisters, the three Sisters of Wem," you hear. They continue: "Go West, West, to find the urn, and when you find it, pour in nine drops of water. Nine," they repeat, "remember this number – nine, nine . . ."

The voices slowly become less distinct, and the vision in the mirror less clear. You start to feel light-headed – turn to **27**.

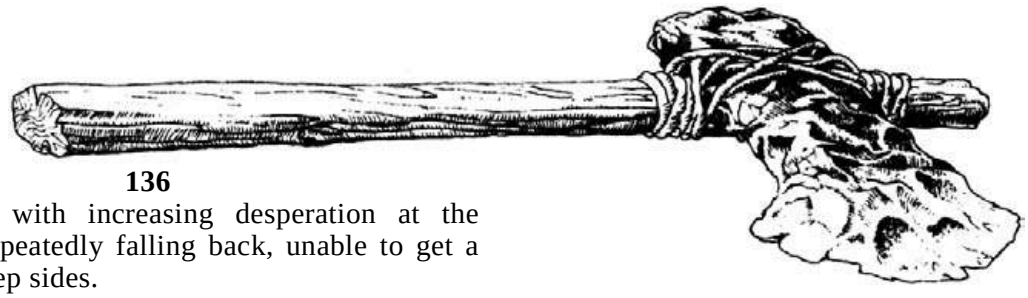
134

Unable to regain your balance, you fall into the water, keeping a tight hold on your backpack as the river closes over your head.

You manage to get to your feet again, and rise spluttering, back into the sunlight. You are wet, and a little shaken, but otherwise all right. However, your backpack, and any provisions you had left are soaked in the brackish water, making the provisions inedible. Angrily, you push through the river until you reach the North bank without further incident. Turn to **146**.

135

The way East very soon opens out into a small, sandy-floored cavern; and lying in the sand is a man in the uniform of the city guard. Moving quickly towards him, you at once see that he is beyond help, his body is cold. But, by the flickering light from your torch, you can just read his last message, written in the sand with his finger. It says: "The bandits to the South-West have the collar, and the . . ." The message ends, and, wondering how the man came to die in this dark and lonely place, you retrace your steps back to the junction. Turn to **68**.



136

You scrabble with increasing desperation at the loose earth, repeatedly falling back, unable to get a grip on the steep sides.

There is the sound of people approaching, rough voices, and the noise of the thick undergrowth either side of the road above being pushed aside. You look up, and in a moment a number of filthy, grinning faces appear above. All the men are holding cross-bows, but one has a rope, and for a second your heart leaps. But only for a second: first one raises his bow, aiming directly at you, and then the others follow, laughing at your plight. Trapped and defenceless, caught like an animal, your adventure ends here.

137

You pay your three gold pieces, and the merchant gives you the small bottle, chuckling to himself as he picks up his lamp and moves back into the shadows. Suspicious, you examine the small bottle, but there is nothing written on it to indicate how it might be useful. Shrugging your shoulders, you place the potion in your backpack, and go back out of the door into the sunlight. Turn to **85**.

138

Did you buy a potion of Fleetfoot? If so, turn to **10**. If not, turn to **47**.

139

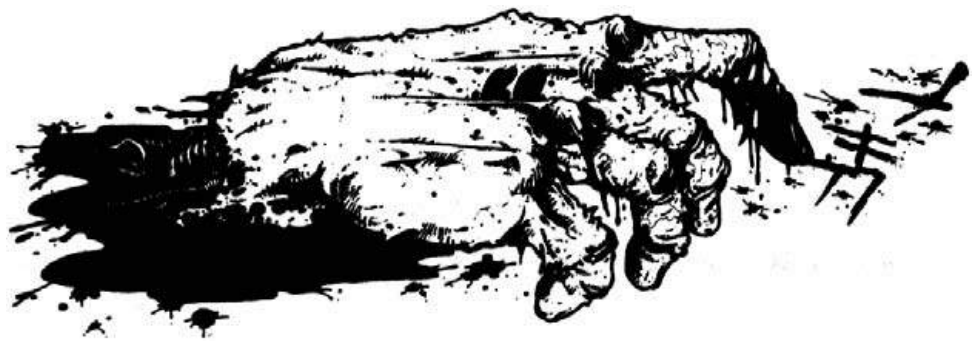
You see no other buildings, and no sign of life as you walk, other than an occasional small lizard, as the undergrowth thins out, and the scenery changes to sparse, arid bush.

The road turns to the East, and you follow it for some way, until you reach a junction. You stop to think for a moment; you could continue East, or try the way North. Turn to **170**.

140

You are just quick enough to avoid the bouncing rocks, and when the rock-fall has subsided, you push on East. The tunnel turns to the North very soon, and you follow it a short way, stopping as you notice a passage on your right. Will you:

Try this way East?	Turn to **135**
Carry on North?	Turn to **16**



141

You leave the small village behind you, aware that it is now past noon, and time is running out.

The road soon turns East, and you hurry along it – but perhaps a little too quickly, as the ground suddenly collapses beneath you, and you fall into a deep pit. Lose two Strength points.

The top of the pit is far above you, and the earth is loose, as you try to climb out. If you have the root of a spear-thyme plant, turn to **182**. If not, turn to **136**.

142

The exiles press forward, some of them drawing daggers and holding sticks. You call out that you are indeed possessed of a sorcerer's powers, and can free their chief. The crowd moves back, and you realise that you must act quickly. If you have a potion of Fleetfoot, and wish to try it, turn to **17**. If you would rather try Heal, turn to **31**. If you have the merchant's sealed scroll, turn to **54**.

143

The road West is not a long one, and feels quite cool by comparison with the merciless heat of the desert.

You arrive at a new road, to the North. You could continue West, or try the way North. You stop for a moment to think. Turn to **170**.

144

Rather reluctantly, you pay the ten gold pieces, and the merchant hands you the scroll, grinning broadly. You decide that, rather than try to read it here, in the poor light and with the merchant hovering over you, you will put it away in your backpack to read later. You slowly back away, out of the hut, and into the harsh sunlight again. Turn to **85**.

145

After a few minutes, the road turns sharply South. In the distance, you can just make out what appears to be a turning to the East again, and so you hurry South. As you do, the wind increases, blowing dust, grit and small twigs into your face. You shield yourself against this battering, leaning forward into the hot gale that assaults you.

As you push forward against the stinging squall, you see, bowling along towards you, two SPIKE-HURLERS! These dangerous plants resemble great balls of spikes, each over two

feet in diameter, with a small, solid centre. They are carried on the wind, and are carnivorous, sensing movement and body heat.

Crouching by the side of the road, you watch with relief as the first passes, and spins crazily North and out of sight. But the second has sensed you, and now dances madly in the fierce wind, preparing to fire its first salvo.

The Spikehurler is an extremely difficult opponent to hit, and to defend against – but you have no choice. Consider the Spikehurler to have a Dexterity of 10, and roll the dice as normal, to determine its *Fighting Power*, and your own; deduct one Strength point each time the Spikehurler's *Fighting Power* is greater than, or the same as, your own. If your *Fighting Power* is greater you have managed to strike it. After four successful rounds of battle, you have defeated the Spikehurler; if at any time, you throw two sixes for yourself, your blade has struck to the heart of the plant, and killed it outright. If you win this battle turn to **84**.

146

You soon discover that the path North continues on this side of the river, and you hurry on, the sun's rays slanting through the trees, the ground thick with decaying leaves and twisted roots and creepers.

You snag your foot on one of the creepers, and a sound above you makes you look up in alarm, as a heavy net, weighted with rocks, drops over you. One of the rocks, larger than your fist, hits you squarely in the forehead . . . and you sink to the ground, unconscious.

You wake, groaning, to a babble of grunting sounds, and a series of sharp pains in your side. Slowly, you are able to focus again, and see a number of small twisted creatures prodding you with sticks, chattering to each other. Awkwardly, and aware of a lump the size of an egg on your head, you draw your dagger and, with difficulty, cut your way out of the net. The FOREST DWARFS back away, as you brandish your sword, throwing small stones and sticks at you. Finally, they all withdraw, back into the foliage, except for one, who stands directly in your path, jumping up and down, and thrusting at you with a short spear. You will have to fight.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
FOREST DWARF:	7	6

If you win, turn to **32**.

147

You gently lift the urn – and as you do so, it shatters into a thousand pieces in your hands. You have come so close: but without one of the sacred artefacts, you cannot hope to prevent Uthergan rising. Your quest is over.

148

Quite soon, the track turns back West, and you hurry through the clinging undergrowth – until you feel something gripping and stinging your leg. Looking down, you see the thin tendrils of a bloodsucking creeper curling round your calf, and hurriedly cut it away. However, the creeper has already left its marks, and you feel as though you have been stung by a nest of wasps. Roll one dice and lose that many Strength points, and, if you are still alive, turn to **99**.

149

The forest shadows are becoming deeper, the shafts of sunlight redder, as you walk, and you realise the amount of time you have lost; soon, it will be sunset.

But for a moment, your attention is caught by something very strange happening ahead: one of the sinewy trees detaches itself from the others and moves into your path. Its long creepers waving, you can now see human features in the trunk. Suddenly, one of the long creepers whips out, lashing you across the face, and knocking you backwards; lose two Strength points. You step back, sword and shield at the ready, as you realise that you will have to cut your way past this strange creature.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
WHIPVINE:	9	8

If you win, turn to **26**.

150

You push into the clinging, humid rain-forest. The air closes about you like a damp veil as you repeatedly wipe the sweat from your forehead, following the narrow path South, the air full of strange wild shrieks and cries.

The twisting trees and foliage close in as you walk, and you stop as you see a rope-ladder hanging down from one of the trees on your left. Will you:

Climb the ladder?	Turn to **127**
Ignore it, and continue South?	Turn to **74**

151

Victorious but exhausted after your struggle, you are dismayed to hear a chorus of roars and growls: a pack of Shiktads appears from the sides, and pads menacingly towards you. Realising your chances now are hopeless, you desperately look for some means of escape, as the powerful animals stealthily approach.

Sheathing your sword, you leap for a branch above you, as the first springs, and clamber higher into the thick leaves. Their meal suddenly snatched away, the creatures bound repeatedly at the branches, but are unable to get a grip. Snarling, their snake's tails spitting, they circle the trunk beneath, and you impatiently wait for them to tire. Turn to **41**.

152

In some pain from the foul creepers, you follow the path as it turns North again, and you realise, as you reach a junction, that you have rejoined the main path, West of where you left it. You carry on West on the main track – turn to **55**.

153

Quite soon, the path turns North again, and you emerge onto a wider, East–West path. You realise that you have rejoined the main path, East of where you left it. You carry on East: turn to 62.

154

It is not long before the path East turns South, and as you hurry South, the sun ever closer to setting, you stop, as you see with dismay, directly in front of you, a hill rising above the forest, circled with rough, tall stones. With the sun almost touching the horizon, you walk with leaden feet towards the stone circle, and begin to climb the hill. Turn to **178**.

155

A short distance along this path, you see a track to your right. Will you:

Try the way North?	Turn to **187**
Continue West?	Turn to **33**

156

The road treads steadily East through dry and dusty bush. To your right, you can just make out the top of a low hill pushing up through shallower ground. You press on East until the road turns South.

The way South is straight, but tall, stone-built walls rise either side of you as you walk. Leaning above you, either side, they mask the sun as you hurry on.

Hurrying through the gloom, you are surprised when the high walls abruptly end, and you find yourself continuing South, towards a dense forest. Turn to **56**.

157

The tunnel North shortly turns East, and becomes narrower and lower, until you have to crawl, using your knees and elbows to push yourself along, holding your torch ahead of you. You are greatly relieved when the tunnel opens out again, and you can stand normally, but you have suffered a number of minor cuts. Lose one Strength point.

Almost at once, the tunnel turns to the South, and you follow this for a short way, until you see an opening on your left. Will you try the way:

East?	Turn to **135**
South?	Turn to **193**

158

You have not gone far South when you are alerted by movement at the side of the road. You stop, and a man steps from behind the trees, standing directly in your path. Dirty and unkempt, his long hair and beard matted, he raises a crossbow, aiming directly at your face, and you realise that he will be able to get at least one shot at you before you are close enough to use your sword.

He has been watching you closely, his expression unchanging, and now he speaks: "Would you care to accompany me, Stranger, to my village? It is called Dathterek."

Intrigued by his offer, and also threatened by the crossbow, you agree. The exile indicates the way East with his bow, and you push with some difficulty through the thick bushes and tangleweed. Your companion follows, and after a few paces, you are surprised to come across a good track through the foliage. You walk due East, the exile a few paces behind you. Turn to **126**.

159

A little further, you see that a narrow track runs off to your right. Will you:

Try the way South?	Turn to	**96**
Continue East?	Turn to	**34**

160

Unless you possess all four artefacts, there is little point in continuing. You may try to take the urn – turn to **147**, or give up in despair, your quest over.

161

The road is good, and you hurry West. But after only a few minutes, your attention is caught by a small wooden shack on your left, set back from the road. You cannot be sure whether or not it is inhabited; there is some kind of sign on the door, but whatever was originally written on it is now faded and illegible.

Your curiosity vies with wariness as you decide what to do. If you wish to investigate the hut, turn to **191**. If you would rather ignore it, and continue West, turn to **25**.

162

You have not travelled much further North, when you see that there is a second shack ahead, on the right. As you approach, you can see that it is very similar to the previous one, with a window in the side wall. Will you:

Investigate this hut?	Turn to	**6**
Ignore it, and continue North?	Turn to	**139**

163

The path East soon turns South, and you stumble into thick vines and broad leaves, all seeming to hold you back. Then you push your way through into a clearing – and ahead of you is a hill, rising out of the forest, circled by tall stones. Slowly, your chest pounding, you begin to climb the hill. Turn to **18**.

164

Picking up the small bottle, you remove the stopper, and, taking a deep breath, swallow the black liquid. It is quite tasteless, and you feel no immediate effects. After a few moments, however, you realise that the circular mirror has begun pulsating with colour, and, shortly, a clear image appears: it is as though you are looking through the mirror into the dense foliage and waving trees of the forest beyond.

As you watch, fascinated, three figures appear: their faces old, lined and grey, they approach until they are staring directly at you. They speak, and their voices are a harsh whisper, that ebbs and flows like the sea on the shore: "Gold, gold," they hiss repeatedly, "give us gold . . ."

If you have three gold pieces, and wish to give them to these mysterious crones, turn to **133**. If not, turn to **27**.

165

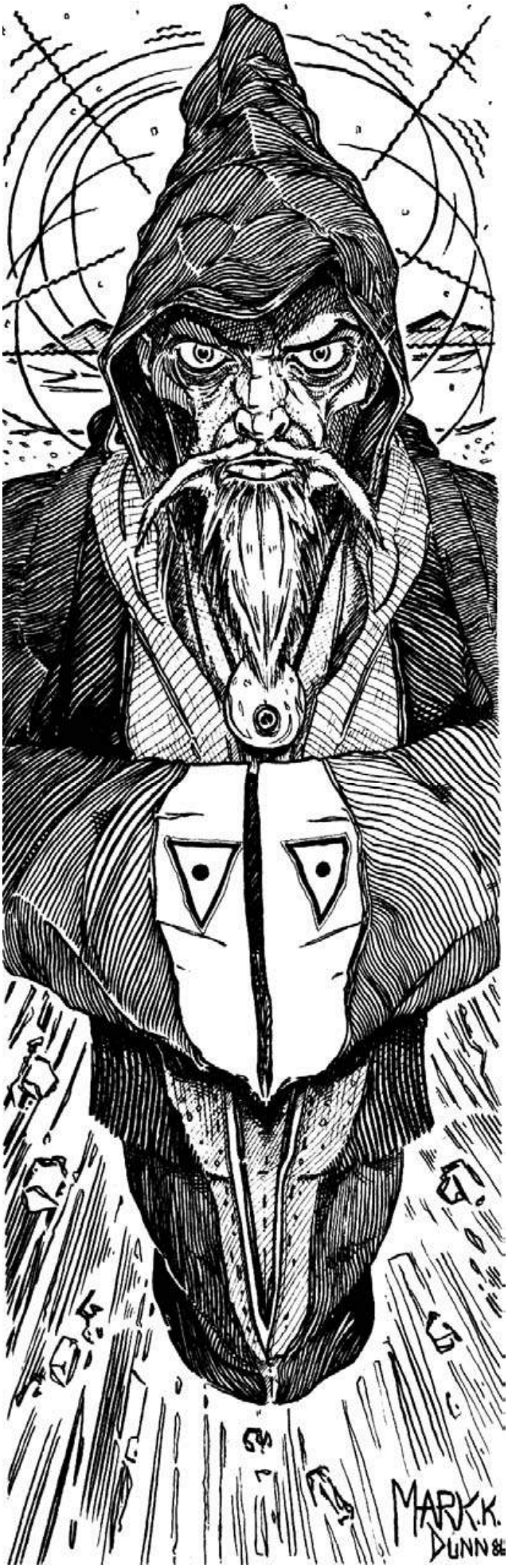
The path soon turns to your right; the undergrowth is particularly thick here, and it takes some effort to make your way forward. Suddenly, you realise that your leg is trapped, and look down to see thin tendrils curling round your ankle. Your leg begins to burn with pain, and you desperately cut away the bloodsucking creepers, and hobble clear of them to examine your leg. Roll one dice and lose that many Strength points. Hoping your leg will soon heal, you limp West – turn to **152**.

166

You begin to feel distinctly uncomfortable as you walk on, and, drawing your sword, you prod at the ground, and it gives a little; kneeling, you scrape away the loose earth – and see darkness. You realise that you were on the verge of stepping into a pit.

Movement either side of the road warns you of danger, and you jump to your feet. A number of men step out, armed with daggers and crossbows – too many to hope to defeat. As the first raises his bow, and the others begin loading, you resign yourself to a last-ditch battle against hopeless odds. The men press closer, but do not fire, and you realise that you are about to be made captive. Your hands are quickly bound, and your backpack ransacked – all your gold pieces and provisions are taken. A rope is tied roughly round your waist, and you are dragged East, the jeering exiles surrounding you. The road at last turns South, and you are dumped on the ground: three of the exiles stand above you and kick you.

Then, to your amazement, one of them cuts your bonds, and the exiles back off, standing at the turning. You pick yourself up, your body aching. Lose five Strength points. You move South as quickly as you can, passing between high stone-built walls as you go, stumbling in the half-light, as the walls blot out the sun. But it is not long before the high walls abruptly end, and you are following a path through dense green plants and strange, twisted trees. The air becomes moist, and ahead of you is a wall of trees. You are approaching a thick forest. Turn to **150**.



167

You look carefully at the goods on offer; the jars and chests are unremarkable, and there is some cheap jewellery. Only the scrolls and potions, you consider, might be of some use. All the while you are looking, the merchant is barely a pace behind, chuckling and telling you constantly of the great value of his wares.

You turn to face him again; will you now buy a scroll? If so, turn to **122**. If you wish to buy a potion instead, turn to **13**.

168

Sword drawn, you push forward through the long, silky grass, expecting at any moment to be attacked. However, you continue North unchallenged, hacking your way through the grass with your sword, until you arrive at the road you saw earlier. Will you now go:

East? Turn to **64**
West? Turn to **50**

169

You push him roughly away, and draw your sword. At once, as though ready for this, the merchant reaches behind him and pulls down an old, rusty, but menacing axe from the wall.

He is surprisingly quick, and you just have time to parry the first blow from the axe; the merchant darts among the tables, swinging the axe, and you brush them aside as you close with him.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
MERCHANT:	11	12

If you win, turn to **119**.

170

As you stand at the junction, deciding which way to go, you see that a figure is approaching from the North. As he nears, you begin to feel uneasy, although he is not armed.

He stops, watching you closely; he is tall and lean, with eyes that seem to bore through you to the depths of your soul; still saying not a word, he slowly raises his hand, and passes it several times in front of your face. You begin to feel light-headed, unreal, unable to focus . . . turn to **117**.

171

He continues chipping away at his stone, saying nothing; you take your dagger from its scabbard and place it gently on the ground in front of him. He stops, and looks at it for a long time, before he raises his eyes, gazing at you intently.

“A fine blade,” he murmurs, “finer than I have seen for many years.”

His face is lined, his features resigned to misery. “We manage as well as we can,” he says. “There are fish in the sea, and plants to hunt.” After a moment’s silence, he returns to his task.

Patiently, you wait for more information, but the man remains silent, chipping away at the stone as though he might have done so for a hundred years. You pick up your dagger again, and silently offer

it: the man stops his work, and looks at you: "What do you want, Stranger?" he asks. And you realise, suddenly confused, that you do not really know. You ask for information and help to recover the artefacts and prevent Uthergan rising. The man gives a short, dry laugh. "In exchange for your dagger, I offer this," he says, holding out what looks like the dried-out root of some plant. "It has great power," he adds. "Bite into it deeply, and you may fly. It is the root of spear-thyme."

Slowly, you hand over your dagger, and carefully place the root of spear-thyme in your backpack, before leaving to continue North. Turn to **83**.

172

You take the small stone block from your backpack, and, working by touch, find a deep indentation in the wall facing you. You push the key into the space, and at once the section of wall facing you rises, with a slow, grating sound. As you pass through, the slab drops back, raising a cloud of dust from the parched earth.

Ahead of you is a similar wall, and, the stone slab having dropped back into place, you see that your position is little better than before: to the North and South, the narrow path is enclosed by high stone walls. Will you now go:

North?	Turn to **125**
South?	Turn to **56**

173

You are not agile enough to avoid the flying rocks, and one catches you a nasty blow – lose two Strength points. Picking yourself up, you clamber over the rock-fall to continue East, but the tunnel soon turns North. A short distance along, you see that there is an opening on your right. Will you:

Try this way East?	Turn to **135**
Continue North?	Turn to **16**

174

You walk over to the hut; there is no sign of life, and you walk round to the side, where there is a small window. The shaft of sunlight crosses the interior obliquely, and you can see a low table, a few chairs and two large chests.

Going back round to the front of the hut, you push open the door – and a crossbow bolt whistles out from the darkened interior. You are just quick enough to raise your shield and deflect the bolt, but it gashes your shoulder as it flies past. Lose three Strength points.

Surprised and hurt, you nevertheless draw your sword and prepare to fight – but there is no sound or movement from within. It appears that someone had set up a booby-trap. Will you now:

Enter the hut?	Turn to **188**
Continue North?	Turn to **162**

175

Grasping the ring firmly, you give a mighty heave – and a trapdoor opens beneath your feet, sending you tumbling and crashing through the branches, to land in a heap on the ground below. Lose three Strength points.

If you are still alive, you may continue on your way – turn to **74**.

176

You hear the sound of rushing water as you head North, and it is not long before the thick foliage suddenly ends, and you step out into the sun, on the edge of a small clearing. Crossing this, you stand on the bank of a river; although the river is not wide, it is fast-flowing, and you cannot tell how deep it is.

Looking around, you notice a narrow, difficult track out of the clearing, to the West. Will you:

Try the way West?	Turn to **67**
Attempt to swim the river?	Turn to **95**

177

You head back swiftly to the junction. There is little point in going back the way you came, and so you hurry along the path East. It very soon turns South, and the track narrows until you are cutting and hacking your way.

But at once you stumble into a clearing: ahead of you, a hill rises above the dense rain-forest, crowned by a circle of stones. The sun is dropping quickly now, almost touching the horizon, as you climb the hill into the sacred circle. Turn to **18**.

178

As the sun begins sinking, the ground at the very centre of the stone circle trembles. You can only stand and watch, transfixed with horror, as the raised burial mound begins to pulsate and break up, as the dying rays of the sun touch it.

In a petrifying burst of sound and movement, the barrow bursts open, and Uthergan, the arch-demon and Lord of Chaos, springs from the place he has been buried; he turns his elongated, multi-fanged skeletal face, and opens his jaws in a triumphant hiss, as he crouches, his twisted, ridged body and spiny limbs quivering. The sense of evil power that emanates is awesome, as he scuttles over the ground, free again to wreak havoc. The dreadful arms reach out for you, as the sun drops fully below the horizon, and night falls – your adventure is over.

179

You swing your sword – but the man is swift and agile, easily swaying away from your blade. Before you can blink, he swings his long pole in a whistling arc, and it catches you full in the stomach, doubling you up, gasping for breath. You hear his laughter, as he pushes off from the bank and disappears downstream. Lose one Dexterity point and three Strength points.

As you get your breath back, you realise that you have no choice now but to wade – turn to **109**.

180

At last the ground shows signs of life again, and the towering cliffs on either side diminish. With renewed hope, your pace quickens, as you see grasses, thorn bushes, and stunted trees either side of the path, and you hurry on until you reach a junction. Will you now go:

West?	Turn to **143**
Continue North?	Turn to **15**

181

You offer your three gold pieces, and the merchant greedily takes them. Pushing a bottle into your hand, he picks up his lamp, extinguishes it, and you feel him brush past you into the deeper darkness at the back of the hut.

Unsure of the worth of your purchase, you place it carefully into your backpack and go back through the door into the bright sunlight beyond. Turn to **85**.

182

Swiftly, you take out the root, and, hoping that it was worth the exchange of your dagger, you bite deeply into it. Nothing happens, and you desperately cram the rest of the bitter-tasting root into your mouth, and chew.

You can hear rough voices, and the sound of a number of people pushing through the thick undergrowth above. But even as this is registering, you realise that you are slowly rising into the air – the man was not lying! You float above the top of the hole, to land gently in the road on the other side. You glimpse a number of villainous-looking characters, most carrying crossbows, emerging from either side of the road, and dash East. One of them looses off a bolt at you, and you feel it whistle through your hair.

Reaching a junction, you stop and look back – but the men seem to have lost interest in you, and are busy re-laying their trap. Although they work quickly, they are thorough, and when they have finished the pit is quite undetectable. They move back away from the road, to lie in wait for another victim, and you have to decide which direction to take now. Will you go:

East?	Turn to **37**
South?	Turn to **3**

183

The path rises, as you walk South up out of the valley, until the road is flat again, and you arrive at a junction. Will you now go:

East?	Turn to **185**
West?	Turn to **22**

184

Your walk along the road West is without incident, and after a time, you arrive at a crossroads. The road South would take you straight back to the ridge, so will you now:

Continue West?	Turn to **76**
Try the road North?	Turn to **40**

185

As you walk East, you become aware of a low, stone-built wall on your right. Soon, there is another on your left, and they rapidly increase in height, all but shutting out the sun. Moving slowly in the murky light, you stumble into another wall, directly in front of you, and connecting the two either side. If you have an artificer's key, turn to **172**. Otherwise, turn to **81**.

186

Your hopes of an easier passage are soon dashed, as the path deteriorates, and you are up to your ankles in soft mud with each step. However, there is little option but to grit your teeth and go forward – either side of you there are pools of boiling mud, filthy stagnant water, and steaming, rotting vegetation.

You stop dead: rising out of the marsh directly in front of you is a large, slimy, wide head. A monstrous body follows, with six powerful arms, each with a pair of talons at the end. You draw your sword for your battle against the MARSH MONSTER, but, because the clinging mud makes movement difficult, reduce your Dexterity by two for this fight.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
MARSH MONSTER	7	16

If you win, turn to **101**.

187

Looking cautiously to left and right, you notice that one of the trees that press in on you has a hole in its trunk. It looks unnatural, as though it has been deliberately made by someone. You peer into the hole, but can see nothing in the deep shadow. If you wish to put your hand into the hole, turn to **42**. If you would rather leave it, turn to **97**.

188

Moving into the hut, your shield before you, you wait for your eyes to become accustomed to the gloom. You can see now the length of cord running from the door to a crossbow at the back of the hut, and wonder who set up this trap, and why. A quick look round confirms that the only things that seem worth investigating are the two chests, and you cautiously lift the lid of one, prepared for any further traps.

To your dismay, it is completely empty. You check for hidden panels, but find nothing, and so you open the second chest. This one is nearly full, packed with clothes, eating and drinking utensils, and weapons. You try one of the swords, and a mace, but decide that your own sword is better. Rummaging further into the chest, you come across a leather bag; inside is a large cluster of dark berries. You now have a choice: to take the berries with you, and leave North, turn to **162**. If you wish to eat some of the berries, turn to **111**. To continue North without them, turn to **162**.

189

Drawing your dagger, you see his eyes widen with fear. Reassuring him, you slice through his bonds and remove the gag.

"A thousand thanks, Stranger," he gasps, "I was left for dead." He looks nervously about him, and continues, "I fear for you if you follow this road – go back South, take the road West."

Before you can question him further, he gives another frightened glance over his shoulder, and runs off South. You think about his words. Will you:

Take his advice, and go back?	Turn to	**94**
Ignore it, and continue North?	Turn to	**89**

190

The track East turns to the North quite soon, before joining a path running East-West. It looks extremely familiar, and you realise that you have rejoined the original path, East of where you left it. Irritated, you turn and head West again. Turn to **30**.

191

Cautiously, you approach the hut, and give the door a gentle push. It swings back on its hinges, creaking gently, and you stand back. You can see nothing beyond the door, and you realise that the shack is windowless; drawing your sword, you move stealthily into the darkness. The air is surprisingly cool after the oppressive heat outside, but smells dusty and old.

A sudden light startles you – approaching is a jovial, clean-shaven man, wearing a smart tunic and carrying a lamp. You cannot make out where he has appeared from, and before you can collect your thoughts, the man puts the lamp on a low table, clasps his hands behind his back and gives you a long look, his head on one side.

"Well," he says at length, "what have we here? A thief?"

Suddenly conscious of the sword in your hand, you clumsily sheathe it and apologise, explaining that you are not a thief, but merely a passing stranger. The man opens his arms and gives a booming laugh. "I don't see many passers-by," he gurgles, when his laughter at last subsided. He turns up the wick on his lamp, and you can now see that his but has several tables covered with cobwebbed jars, chests, scrolls and small bottles.

"What would you like to buy, my friend?" he asks. You look around again; you can see nothing that looks like any of the artefacts that Glamarye described, and yet there is something about this strange merchant that intrigues you. Will you:

Buy something?	Turn to	**167**
Leave?	Turn to	**85**
Attack the merchant?	Turn to	**169**

192

Walking round the West side of the cave, you begin the climb North up the ridge of Pen-Dinas. Although at first it is fairly easy going, it soon becomes a much steeper climb. As you near the top, you are able to look back at the city of Valantia, and, as you

reach the summit, look North at the countryside ahead.

You shiver for a moment: having now stopped, you realise that it is very much colder at the peak of the ridge. But before descending, you scan the countryside ahead: at the bottom of the ridge, there is a field of waving grasses, and beyond that, a road running East-West. Further away, to the North-East, there seems to be a forest, while to the North-West, there are roads through land that looks barren.

Quickly climbing down the other side of the ridge, you begin pushing your way through the tall grasses, towards the road ahead. You shortly have to use your sword as a scythe, as the grasses become thicker and more tangled.

You reckon the road must be close now, but a low growling alerts you to danger; you wait, and see movement ahead. Prepared for attack, you duck, raising your shield, as a massive WOLF leaps at you. It falls to the ground not far away, and gets at once to its feet again, snarling, and circling warily. Even as it does so, a second Wolf appears, even larger and more ferocious than the first. It pads steadily through the tangled grasses towards you, as its partner awaits the outcome of the struggle that is about to start. If you defeat the first Wolf, the second will attack.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
FIRST WOLF:	10	10
SECOND WOLF:	9	8

If you defeat, both, turn to **24**.

193

The passage South is not a long one, and soon turns to the West. You are glad of your torch, as you almost stumble over the many small rocks that are scattered on the ground. A grating, rumbling noise from your left makes you stop in alarm, as you see that a section of the rock-face is crumbling and falling away, and small boulders bounce towards you. Roll two dice. If the total is the same as, or greater than your current Dexterity score, turn to **118**. If it is less, turn to **21**.

194

Picking up the pouch, you open it and take a look at the unremarkable powder it contains. You have no idea how to use it, but, considering that it may help you in some way later, you put it in your backpack before continuing. Turn to **11**.

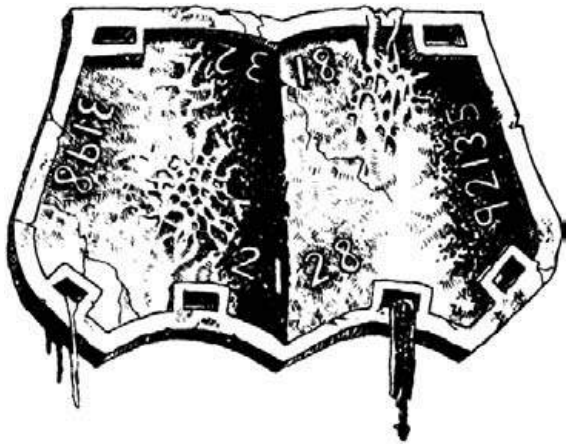
195

Your battle with the Ghouls over, you breathe a sigh of relief and wipe your sword, before turning again to examine the golden plate, and your heart lifts – it is exactly as Glamarye described, and you prepare to remove the first artefact from the chest of the skeleton. Gently at first, and then with increasing effort you pull at the plate, but it does not give an inch. Puzzled, you stand back, remembering Glamarye's words – each of the artefacts is in some way protected.

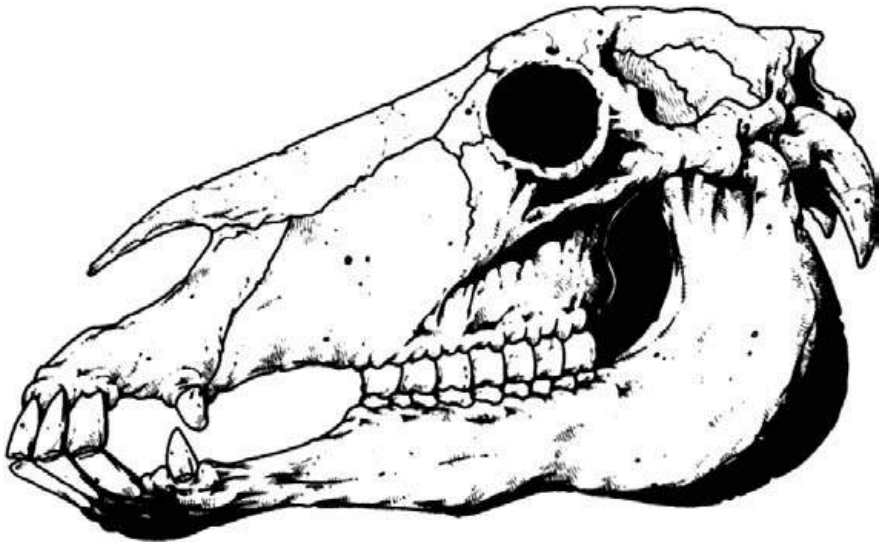
You begin looking for some clue that will help you to free the plate, but it is not until you gently examine the skeleton itself that your careful search is rewarded. Clutched in its left hand is a scroll, and you slowly remove the cracked and faded parchment, and unroll it to read:

'This plate of gold clutches my heart,
My spirit is held in these bones.
Say the golden number and I may depart
This corpse, and this cavern of stones.
Begin at the East, and – read this with care –
Take each number from that inscribed there;
Go against the clock – then you have the number
That will release me from my twilit slumber,
But *closed in sevens*: lift these sevens to attain your goal,
And to free at last my captured soul.'

Puzzled, you look at the plate, and can now clearly see that there are numbers inscribed into the plate at either edge, and top and bottom:



You read the scroll again, and look again at the plate. When you have worked out the 'golden number', turn to the section with the same number. If you are unable to work it out, turn to **49**.



196

The path shortly turns to the South, and soon peters out – you have to push and cut your way through the branches, leaves, and vines until you emerge onto a path again. You quickly realise that you have got back onto the track which you left earlier, and so you continue on your original way West, until you see that there is also a path on your left. Will you:

Try the way South? Turn to **165**
Carry on West? Turn to **30**

197

The bridge sways dangerously from side to side as you cross it; beneath you, the abyss beckons, and you determinedly look straight ahead, slowly placing one foot in front of the other, until, sweating, you reach the South side. The sun is lowering in the sky now, and you are aware that there is little time left, as you hurry South. Turn to **113**.

198

Struggling, you just manage to keep your footing on the slippery river-bed, and continue safely to the North bank, where you rest for a moment and look at your surroundings. Turn to **146**.

199

The crowd quickly becomes angry, as you stand in the clearing, and a few stones are aimed at you from the back of the crowd. As though this is a signal, the others grab sticks, stone daggers, and clubs, and rush at you. You raise your shield just in time to protect yourself against a bolt from a crossbow, and draw your sword. The crowd backs away, and you move through them, backing away East.

Their settlement is small, and once clear of it, you run into the foliage beyond. You have escaped, but the sun is lowering towards the horizon, and you have not got the collar of amber. Without all four artefacts, you will be unable to prevent Uthergan rising . . . your quest is over.

200

You sink to the ground, drained, as night swiftly falls. The Lord of Chaos is no more, and Valantia is safe. The events of the long day tumble through your mind, making sleep impossible, and you slowly walk, in the cool night air, around the enchanted circle, surveying the forest. Tomorrow, you will again buckle on your sword and shield, and return to Valantia, to spread the good news.

But now, you stand, at the crest of the enchanted circle, looking into the eternal black sky, glittering with stars. You have succeeded. You will fight another day.

MESSAGES FROM BEYOND

Dear PROTEUS.

I have several things to say – but first, the praise. The magazine is entertaining and well thought-out: the layout is fairly good (though could be improved). A poster each issue is a good idea.

I feel that the art, however, does take up a lot of room. I would rather have more descriptions, because that way you can use your "grey matter" to imagine what's going on: perhaps the fillers could be removed to make way for this. Have fewer larger pieces, two or three from each artist would be more than enough, I believe. I'm sure that other readers would agree with me, that when the quest is finished. It is the way in which it was written, not the pictures, that stick in the mind – go on, ask them!

I do not think you should have a joke page, as this will spoil the otherwise professional appearance. I would rather see the space used for extending the length of the adventure.

The only other features I think you could add are a swap page and a continuing serial, about the size of a normal cartoon (three to four frames).

I feel that the actual adventures could be improved – for instance, you could be given the option when meeting a monster, to try to reason, rather than fight (if it is capable of speech and/or reasoning).

Mood could be employed – for example, if finding a certain object makes you happy, then you might have more chance of winning in battles. Bad luck could make you so downhearted that the situation could get worse. Try to include more problem-solving.

I feel I must congratulate you on your low (80p) price. Some computer mags I read have £1 price tags. How about making the scenarios longer? I wouldn't mind paying more for a 300-location adventure.

Steven Hutchinson,
Corby, Northants.

Dear PROTEUS,

I write this in response to the letter from Ms Stella Atkinson in issue No. 8. I am a mere child of only 39 years myself. I am employed in a reasonably serious job as a Quality Engineer covering Quality Assurance aspects of Nuclear Submarine Construction. I do, however, derive great enjoyment and relaxation and, yes, even satisfaction from "playing" these types of games.

As to Stella's point about live role-playing, I make the following comments: Yes, I do fantasise about the possibilities of being Robin Hood, Doc Savage or even Cowboys/Indians, but although my mind is certainly willing I am honest enough to admit that my body is no longer up to the rigours of that kind of physical involvement any more, and I believe that is the way it should be. The mental image of, say, forest camp life and the reality are surely vastly different.

In general I am happy enough with the magazine as it stands with perhaps more complexity and even deviousness in the story lines. With regard to artwork, some of it may contribute to the story but generally I find it detracts rather than contributes.

Allan Smith,
Barrow-in-Furness,
Cumbria.

Dear PROTEUS.

Living in Australia, my friend and I have only one real problem. That is that we don't get your magazine regularly enough, which is a shame.

Your magazine is undoubtedly the best fantasy gaming magazine of its kind in this country. We eagerly await more as we cannot get enough of your dungeon and countryside adventures, as they are excellent and decidedly dangerous (for our character, that is).

We hope you print our letter to let all of our fellow PROTEUS readers in your country know that fantasy gaming and PROTEUS are alive and well down under.

P.S. The demon in No. 5 was unreal!!

Stephen Britt &
Christopher Sergent,
Kempsey, N.S.W.,
Australia.

Dear PROTEUS.

I want to admit that your magazine is very good. I like your black and white illustrations – they really seem to add to the atmosphere. But on reading some of the letters from last month's magazine. I was disgusted to see the ideas of two writers. They wanted (ugh!) science fiction stories to be introduced into PROTEUS.

Until buying PROTEUS I searched high and low for a real fantasy magazine but I was put off by the science fiction stories. Then I saw PROTEUS. At last, I said to myself, a magazine devoted to fantasy, until these absurd letters were printed. So please, please do not alter your magazine as I think it is a lifesaver to my kind of fantasy readers.

Are there any Tolkien fanatics out there, as I feel I am on my own?

P.S. I love the cartoon!

Yours non-space-ageingly

James Jordan,
Dublin,
Ireland.

Dear PROTEUS,

I managed to buy the books advertised in your mag entitled 'White Warlord' and 'Black Baron'. These books are excellent.

I think your story about the 'Treasure of the Cursed Pyramid' was a bit disappointing as these adventures are getting easy for me. I don't know if am getting better at them or not but other people might have the same opinion as me. So please, please, please could you make the riddles harder.

I am sending you a picture. I hope you like it.

Martin Blackie,
C Rushden,
Northants.

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